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OPINION METER

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INSIDE

ASIA



A senior official in Chinese-ruled Tibet is ordering heightened security.

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FOCUS



Americans board flights on foreign airlines every year with no idea of how safe they are.

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LIFE & STYLE



The Olympics inject huge investments into changing the face of London's East End.

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Interior seeks austerity exemption

» Brown tree snake, coral reef protection programs may be at risk

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

U.S. Interior Assistant Secretary for Insular Affairs Tony Babauta has asked Gov. Benigno R. Fitial to exempt from work hour cuts the Interior-funded brown tree snake control and coral reef protection programs, citing economic and ecological threats to the CNMI if these programs are not allowed to fully operate.

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NMC expands number of online courses

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Northern Marianas College president Sharon Y. Hart led yesterday the official launch of several non-credit online courses at the institution.

This was made possible by the college's partnership with ed2go, a company that offers a wide range of highly interactive courses that one can take entirely over the Internet. The company, which works only with accredited colleges and

universities in the United States, has partnerships with over 1,800 colleges and universities across America.

NMC, according to Hart, is the organization's newest member and is now able to offer over

See NMC on Page 4

Despite valid advance parole, alien worker not allowed to board plane'

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

A long-term nonresident worker with an advance parole valid until Jan. 31, 2012, was not allowed to board a plane from the Philippines to the CNMI via Guam on Jan. 30, leaving her stranded at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Manila and is now in jeopardy of losing her job on Saipan, said a workers' group leader yesterday.

Rene Reyes, founding president of the Marianas Advocates for Humanitarian Affairs Ltd. or

Mahal, said it is disappointing to learn that Continental Micronesia, the federal immigration office in Guam, and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services "may have not been coordinating" when it comes to honoring valid travel documents held by nonresidents in the CNMI.

Reyes said the stranded alien worker has a pending Commonwealth-only worker petition filed by her employer.

On the night of Jan. 30, Continental in Manila reportedly did not allow the alien worker

See DESPITE on Page 4



'THANK YOU'

Commerce Secretary Sixto Igisomar, left, gestures as he addresses a crowd in the governor's conference room on Capital Hill yesterday morning while U.S. Interior Assistant Secretary for Insular Affairs Tony Babauta, center, and Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, right, look on during a ceremony thanking 19 employers who hired at least 84 eligible U.S. workers as a result of a job fair that the CNMI Department of Commerce and the Interior co-hosted in October 2011. See story on Page 4

NMC removes 2 officer positions in reshuffle. PAGE 2
5th Republican to run as 'independent' in Nov. PAGE 3

Local

NMC eliminates two officer positions in reorganization

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The Northern Marianas College is reorganizing some of its programs and services to cut operational costs, resulting in the elimination of two top positions at the college.

NMC president Sharon Y. Hart told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that the positions of chief financial and administrative officer and dean of Community Services have been terminated.

Hart confirmed that chief financial officer Roger Madriaga is no longer connected with the college after the expiration of

his limited-term contract.

Hart, in consultation with deans, managers, and governance council at the college, said it was decided that this post will no longer be filled because NMC's finance and budget office has enough competent staff.

Prior to this, the budget officer and finance officials directly reported to the CFAO.

Hart said the deanship post for the Community Services program, more commonly known as COMPASS, was also eliminated.

David J. Attao, who used to occupy that position, was recently named dean for Ad-

ministration, a newly created position that will oversee the administrative offices including the finance and budget offices, of the college.

NMC has three dean positions—dean of Student Services, dean of Academic Programs, and dean of Administration.

Hart said that programs and services that were previously under COMPASS will be distributed to the three dean positions while some will directly operate under the President's Office.

She said it is their "ultimate goal" to downsize the college without sacrificing the qual-

ity of education and services it provides.

"We now have an equal playing field across the institution because almost all areas in the college really report to the deans except for some offices that are directly under my office," Hart said.

The Adult Basic Education program, which used to be under COMPASS, has been moved to Academic Services, which Hart said "makes perfect sense."

The College Research, Extension and Education Service or CREES, she said, will be moved directly to the president's office, similar to the setup in many

other universities and colleges. Meantime, the Community Development Institute under acting director Floyd Masga will function under the dean of Administration.

Hart is confident that this

reorganization will result in substantial savings for the college. She could not immediately quantify the saving that will be realized but said the college will continuously assess all programs and services.



FERDIE DE LA TORRE

ISLAND VISITOR

U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor stresses a point during a news briefing on Sunday at the U.S. District Court for the NMI's courthouse. Sotomayor left for Guam that night.

WITH SENATE PRESIDENT OUT FROM LAWSUIT

Judge Manglona now wants to preside over Davis' lawsuit

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

reassignment of the case to another judge.

Davis' lawyer, Jeanne Rayphand, earlier told *Saipan Tribune* that they decided to just remove Senator Manglona and Speaker Cabrera from the lawsuit as the two are apparently not interested in participating in the lawsuit.

Davis, a U.S. citizen, is suing to stop the election commission from denying U.S. citizens who are not of Northern Marianas descent the right to vote on issue relating Article 12 of the CNMI Constitution or on any other issues.

Manglona withdrew her recusal order after Davis removed Senate President Paul A. Manglona (Ind-Rota) and House Speaker Eliceo D. Cabrera (R-Saipan) from his lawsuit on Friday.

In her order issued Monday, Judge Manglona said that she disqualified herself from the Davis' lawsuit last Jan. 20 because Senate President Manglona is her brother-in-law. Dismissal of the action against Senator Manglona has eliminated the conflict that required her recusal, she said.

"The order of recusal is hereby vacated," Judge Manglona said.

The judge directed the court's clerk to immediately send a copy of her order withdrawing recusal to Chief Judge Alex Kozinski of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and to withdraw the request for



Manglona

CEC executive director Robert A. Guerrero, and Gov. Benigno R. Fitial.

Article 12 limits landownership in the CNMI only to those of NMI descent. It is up for voters' review this November. Article 18 Section 5(c) of the CNMI Constitution restricts voting on this issue to only those who are of NMI descent.

Davis wants the court to bar the defendants from denying him and other U.S. citizens who are not NMI descent the right to vote.

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Fifth Republican to run as 'independent' in Nov. polls

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

It's now Rep. Tony Sablan's (R-Saipan) turn to announce he's seeking re-election on Nov. 6 but will run as an independent candidate—just like four of his fellow incumbent Republicans.

"After consulting with my family and supporters, I decided to seek re-election as an independent," Sablan, from Precinct 1, told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday. "There's never been any formal communication from the current Republican Party leadership asking my intention whether I intend to run again or not. How can you reorganize a party without consulting all your members and give the incumbents a chance?"

Sablan, a former immigration director, is the fifth among members of the minority bloc to announce bolting out of Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's Republican Party for the midterm elections.

The others are House minority leader Joseph Deleon Guerrero (R-Saipan), Rep. Ray Tebuteb (R-Saipan), Rep. Frank Dela Cruz (R-Saipan), and Rep. Ray Yumul (R-Saipan), who is running for a Senate seat.

Long-time Republican lawmakers have expressed disappointment with the governor's selection as GOP president in

November, when party bylaws were amended to allow a sitting governor to become party president and when an election of officers was held without inviting the incumbent Republicans.

Tebuteb, in a separate interview yesterday, said the incumbent Republicans' decision to run as independents in November is not only because

of the current leadership but also as a result of consultation with their constituents, among other things.

Tebuteb, at the same time, announced that he will support Delegate Gregorio Kilili Sablan's (Ind-MP) re-election bid, while Sablan said he's likely to also support the incumbent delegate.

So far, Kilili Sablan is the

Saipan) and Rep. Joseph Palacios (R-Saipan).

At least two Covenant Party members and one independent will also move to the Republican Party.

Sources said once independents and Covenant Party members coalesce in the House after the November elections, they may be able to take over the House leadership.

Palacios, Yumul submit certified query on veto of Saipan casino bill

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Reps. Joseph M. Palacios (R-Saipan) and Ray N. Yumul (R-Saipan) filed yesterday before the CNMI Supreme Court a certified question whether or not a local law enacted by the Saipan Northern Island Legislative Delegation is considered a Commonwealth law.

Palacios and Yumul submitted the certified question after Superior Court associate judge David A. Wiseman dismissed for lack of standing Palacios' lawsuit against Gov. Benigno

R. Fitial for vetoing the controversial Saipan casino bill.

Wiseman had noted in his order that the CNMI Constitution provides the certified question process as a means of redress when a dispute arises between elected officials, allowing an issue to be processed faster before the Supreme Court.

Palacios, a member of the House's majority, and Yumul, a member of the House's minority, filed the certified question without a lawyer.

In their statement of facts, the two said they are following

Wiseman's directive and seeking redress.

Palacios and Yumul said that Public Law 3-77 states that in case the governor vetoes a local bill, the Legislature may override the governor's veto by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of each house of the Legislature.

However, the lawmakers said, if House Local Bill 17-44 was over-ridden by both houses of the Legislature, the enacted law still remains a local law, and the status of the local law in this case remains subject to the issue: "Is a local law a Com-

monwealth law and what about this relationship to Article 21 of the NMI Constitution?"

Palacios, as chairman of SNILD's Committee on Judicial and Governmental Operations, had recommended passage of House Local Bill 17-44 to legalize casino gaming by exempting Saipan from the

Commonwealth-wide prohibition on gambling.

The delegation passed the bill on Aug. 26, 2011. Yumul voted against the passage of the bill, stating that a local law enacted by the delegation is not a Commonwealth law.

Fitial subsequently vetoed the bill.

Witness says gas can found at fire scene

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A firefighter testified yesterday that a container with gasoline was found at the scene of a fire that engulfed a clothing store in Garapan in 2010.

Firefighter Kevin C. Guerrero said that based on the positions of the mannequins and blown out glasses outside the building, it appeared there was an explosion at BL Clothing Store.

Guerrero was the fourth witness called to the stand yesterday by attorney Richard W. Pierce, counsel for FirstNet Insurance Co., in the ongoing jury trial in the U.S. District Court of FirstNet's lawsuit against Zhen Rui Brother Corp.

Fire policy insurer FirstNet is suing Zhen Rui Brother Corp., owner of BL Clothing Store, for

allegedly deliberately setting off the fire so that the owner could claim \$404,718.53 in insurance proceeds.

Zhen Rui Brother Corp., through counsels Ramon Quichocho and Michael Dotts, filed a counterclaim against FirstNet, alleging breach of contract, breach of implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing, insurance bad faith, and unfair or deceptive business practices.

Guerrero testified that he was the shift supervisor at the Department of Public Safety's Fire Division when the fire at BL Clothing Store happened in the early morning of Oct. 30, 2010.

Guerrero said they were able to put out the fire after a couple of hours.

He said one of the firefighters at the scene picked up a container inside the burned building and

showed it to him. When the firefighter told him it was gasoline, he said he instructed the firefighter to put it back because it will be part of their investigation.

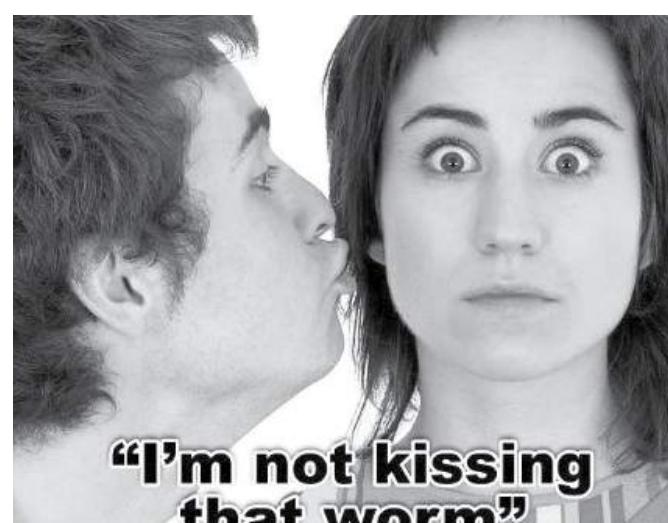
Pierce earlier stated in court papers that among the items collected by their arson investigator at the scene were a candle, white plastic cap, and remains from the samples (fire debris), which are all in Malaysia in cus-

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tody of the investigator.

Attorneys Quichocho and Dotts are expected to cross-examine Guerrero when the trial resumes today, Wednesday, at 8:30am.

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Interior lauds 19 employers for hiring 84 US eligible workers

»Search for CNMI economist ongoing, as 6 NGOs train US workers

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Interior Assistant Secretary for Insular Affairs Tony Babauta recognized yesterday 19 CNMI employers for hiring 84 eligible U.S. workers as a result of a job fair that the CNMI Department of Commerce and the Interior co-hosted in October 2011.

During a ceremony in the governor's conference room yesterday morning, Babauta named 12 employers that hired

46 workers. Representatives of these employers were at the ceremony.

A more up-to-date data from CNMI Commerce's Mark Rabauliman, project coordinator for the Economic and Labor Enhancement Program, shows that there were actually 19 employers who were able to hire 84 workers as a result of the job fair.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and Commerce Secretary Sixto Igisomar, during the ceremony,

also lauded these employers and thanked Interior. Also present at the event were other Interior and CNMI government officials.

Of the 19 employers, Sablan Topline hired the most number of workers, at 20, followed by Fiesta Resort & Spa with 10, Saipan Grand Hotel with nine, and Hafa Adai Hotel and YCO Corp. with six each.

Completing the list are Jet Holdings, five; Marianas Cable, MCV Broadband, Star Sands Plaza, World Resort Saipan and

Younis Art Studio with three employees each; Hyatt Regency Saipan, R Corp., S.T.A.R. Water, Seafix Inc., and Triple J Enterprise with two employees each; and Good Day Saipan, GPPC, and Moylan's Insurance with one employee each.

During the ceremony, Babauta also recognized representatives of the six non-governmental organizations that were recipients of the Economic Labor Enhancement Program sub-grant under the Interior's techni-

cal assistance grant.

These NGOs are expected to expand and enhance "on-the-job training" and "job-readiness" to train U.S. eligible workers that include U.S. citizens, Freely Associated States citizens, and green card holders.

These groups include the CNMI Aquaculture Producers Association, \$90,000; Saipan Sabalu Farmers Market Inc., \$46,000; Marianas Resource Conservation and Development Council, \$145,000; North-

ern Marianas Trade Institute, \$143,000; Society for Human Resources Management, \$102,000, and The Bridge Project, \$60,000.

The amount awarded to these NGOs, a total of \$586,000, is part of the Interior's \$1 million grant award to CNMI Commerce in July 2011.

The other \$300,000 will be used to hire a CNMI economist.

Commerce's Rabauliman said as of yesterday, the request for proposal for such an economist is still being drafted.

INTERIOR

From Page 1

Fitial has yet to respond to Babauta's Jan. 25 letter request as of late afternoon yesterday.

Babauta told Fitial that only about 35 percent of all incoming, high-risk flights from Guam are being inspected for brown tree snakes because of work hour cuts and the inability to charge overtime costs to the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs grants.

As a result of these austerity measures, Babauta said the reduced clearance rate is well below the brown tree snake interdiction program's goal of 90 percent, thereby increasing the brown tree snake threat to

the CNMI.

The Interior-funded Brown Tree Snake Interdiction Program is administered by the CNMI Department of Lands and Natural Resources. Acting DLNR Secretary Arnold Palacios has already requested Fitial to exempt the program from austerity measures.

"I respectfully urge you to approve his [Palacios] request to ensure that the program can function at its full capacity, thereby helping to protect the Northern Marianas from this harmful invasive species," Babauta told Fitial in a two-page letter, a copy of which was obtained last night.

Babauta, in his letter, reminded Fitial that a similar request for exemption for the brown

tree snake control program was made in December 2010.

"It must be emphasized that the brown tree snake poses a significant ongoing economic and ecological threat to the Commonwealth that is preventable, in part, through your actions," he said.

Babauta talked about his letter to Fitial in an interview yesterday morning on Capitol Hill when he recognized certain employers for hiring eligible U.S. workers as a result of a job fair co-hosted by the CNMI Department of Commerce and the U.S. Department of the Interior last year.

Press secretary Angel Demapan, in a separate interview yesterday, confirmed the governor's receipt of Babauta's letter but said the governor has yet to

respond to it. He said there's no telling yet what the governor's response will be.

CNMI Attorney General Edward Buckingham issued a legal opinion in December stating that the governor has the power to impose austerity on both locally and federally funded Executive Branch employees, and that the Legislature cannot—through the budget law—place limitations on the governor's power to impose austerity, modify, or rescind parts of the governor's austerity directive or prescribe its terms.

Fitial issued a directive last year subjecting all executive departments and agencies to 16-hour work cuts per pay period, covering local and federally funded personnel as part of the

ongoing austerity programs.

As of now, only certain personnel at the departments of Public Safety and Corrections and the Emergency Management Office are exempted from the 16-hour work cuts.

Babauta also raised concerns about the effects of the austerity measures on the CNMI's Coral Reef Program, also funded by the Interior's OIA.

Coral reefs, he said, are one of the most important tourist attractions, annually generating significant revenues for the CNMI.

"[The] CNMI's Coral Reef Program is providing leadership and tangible results for coral reef management and protection in the insular areas. Notable among [the] CNMI's efforts has

been the restoration of LauLau Bay," he said.

Because of its well-developed coral reefs, LauLau Bay is Saipan's best dive site, providing important economic as well as ecological benefits.

"Sedimentation from adjacent roads, streams, and hillsides is threatening these resources. We are concerned that these and other restoration efforts funded under the Coral Reef Program will be eroded as a result of the austerity measures," Babauta told Fitial.

Babauta arrived on Saipan Saturday night to accompany the historic visit of U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor in the CNMI. He stayed behind to check on Interior programs in the CNMI.

DESPITE

From Page 1

to board the plane headed for Guam.

"She told Continental her advance parole is still valid until Jan. 31. She was supposed to leave Manila on Jan. 30 evening, arrive in Guam

early morning on Jan. 31 and then to Saipan also on Jan. 31. But she said when Continental asked the immigration office in Guam, they told the airline not to allow her to board the plane. She has a valid parole and was not allowed to board the plane. It's disappointing [as] there may be lack of coordination," Reyes told *Saipan Tribune*.

The nonresident worker asked that her name be withheld at this time because it might further jeopardize her employment status in the CNMI, Reyes added.

In December, the nonresident worker had to travel to the Philippines because of a death in the family. Before leaving Saipan, she applied for a \$360 advance parole, which

was issued on Jan. 19 but she was only able to receive it in Manila on Jan. 24. Because of unavailability of seats, she could only book a Jan. 30 return flight to the CNMI.

"She's been stranded in Manila. I went to the USCIS office in Garapan Monday and even the officers there were surprised that Continental re-

fused to board the worker even though she has a valid travel document," Reyes said.

The workers' group leader said USCIS-Garapan advised him to tell the stranded worker to fill out a Form I-131 or the advance parole form but indicate it's for humanitarian parole, for submission to the U.S. Embassy in Manila.

"Hopefully that will allow her to return to the CNMI. Right now, her job is in jeopardy because she's supposed to be back in the CNMI by now but because of what happened, she is stranded in Manila. I hope USCIS will be able to clarify the matter with Continental and with the immigration offices in Guam," Reyes added.

NMC

From Page 1

300 courses and certificates online to Commonwealth students.

Hart described these courses as typically 24 hours in length, open every month, and allow students to cross-engage in the whole learning process.

Among the hundreds of courses now available for offering by NMC are accounting and finance, business, computer applications, health care and medical, language and arts, law and legal, personal development, teaching and education, technology, and writing.

Hart said the fee for each online course is \$95, almost similar to the fee being paid by a regular student attending classes on campus. At NMC, tuition for a three-credit course is almost \$100.

About a third of the online fee will go to NMC, Hart said, while the rest will go to ed2go, which will bear all the cost of this "partnership" with the college.



Northern Marianas College president Sharon Y. Hart speaks to the media during yesterday's official launch of more online courses at the college through the partnership with ed2go.

Besides incoming college students, NMC also encourages private sector employers to avail

panding the options for students who are seeking more training opportunities to advance their careers," said Hart, adding the partnership also allows students to take affordable online career training programs to prepare them to launch new careers or advance in existing ones.

According to NMC officials, through well-crafted lessons, expert online instruction, and interaction with fellow students, students will gain valuable knowledge at their convenience. They will also have the flexibility to study at their own pace combined with enough structure and support to complete the course.

Hart said the new sessions for each six-week course start monthly—with two lessons released weekly (for a total of 12). Each course includes comprehensive lessons, quizzes, assignments, and a discussion area. For the online career training programs, these start anytime and range from three to six months.

ACCJC gives green light

Hart said the college sought

the accreditation commission's permission prior to securing this partnership with ed2go. The commission later approved the proposal.

The Legislature and the Board of Regents were also informed and given all information about the plan prior to signing the contract with ed2go.

It took NMC about eight months to finalize the partnership with the organization.

NMC is also working on a partnership with another online company, JRE, to boost its online offerings.

"Online is, by far, the fastest growing industry in higher education. So we are making sure that we are providing this opportunity to those who want to avail of distant educational courses," said Hart, adding that it is her goal to see NMC offer at least a thousand online courses within the year.

In the last semester alone, the college saw a 70-percent increase in its number of online courses, according to Barbara Merfalen, NMC's dean of Academic Services.

Oil pricing 'band' will allow for immediate LEAC adjustment

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Despite the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission's decision not to act on the proposed monthly fuel adjustment clause, or MFAC, on Friday, the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. will still be able to adjust its leveled energy adjustment clause, or LEAC, if necessary.

This came about after commissioner Viola Alepuyo established a "band" of plus or minus 4.5 percent for oil pricing that allows CUC to automatically adjust the LEAC rate in the coming weeks or months that the commission is expected to be non-operational due to a lack of quorum.

CUC chief financial officer Charles Warren told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that by setting the band on oil pricing, CUC can adjust its LEAC rate if fuel prices go up or down by more

than 4.5 percent.

"The PUC created a 'band' for oil pricing, and if prices exceed the band, or become less than the band, CUC can make an adjustment. So, if prices go up over 4.5 percent, CUC can adjust the LEAC for the new fuel price," he said.

LEAC is part of the customer's bill that reflects the cost of fuel. The other element is the electric base rate. The LEAC rate is calculated every six months.

In its testimony filed with the commission on Dec. 8, CUC consultant economists.com recommended changing the current LEAC model as it is "too complex" and costs CUC ratepayers too much. It proposed changing this to the MFAC model, which is calculated on the first day of every month.

A bill proposing a switch from LEAC to MFAC is pending in the Legislature.

According to Robert Young of economists.com, the commission's decision gave CUC the ability to reflect the true prices of oil when it occurs.

"With this commission order, we could adjust the LEAC because that's part of the tariff," Young said after Friday's meeting. Prior to this, CUC has to file a petition with the commission if it wishes to change the LEAC rate.

During Friday's meeting, the commission approved a new LEAC rate of \$0.30550 per kWh effective Jan. 28 this year. This is a reduction from the current \$0.30791 per kWh.

The commission also determined that CUC charged too high a LEAC from Aug. 1, 2010, through Sept. 30, 2011, amounting to \$1.986 million, and ordered CUC to refund the amount to its customers over the next 14 months by an adjustment credit of \$0.00807.

Motion to dismiss complaint of former Hillbrook trustee nixed

The U.S. district court has denied Guam-based lawyer David J. Lujan's motion to dismiss a cross-complaint filed against him by a former trustee of the Junior Larry Hillbrook Trust.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona ruled that Lujan's improper-venue defense has no merit.

Manglona said that former trustee of Junior Larry Hillbrook (JLH) Keith A. Waibel's claims of indemnity and contribution are not foreclosed because of his own alleged negligence.

Hillbrook is the reported DNA-proven son of the late

business tycoon Larry Lee Hillblom. He is suing his former lawyers Barry J. Israel and Lujan in district court for allegedly conspiring to inflate their contingency fee when Hillblom's fortune was still undergoing probate proceedings. Waibel is also named a co-defendant in the case.

Waibel filed a cross-complaint (third-party complaint) against Israel and Lujan so that in the event he is found liable in Hillbrook's lawsuit, he could claim indemnity and contribution from Israel and Lujan.

Lujan asked the court to dismiss Waibel's cross-complaint, asserting that because Waibel

does not allege fraud, he has no basis to claim a right of indemnity or contribution. Lujan also argued, among other things, that the venue is improper.

In denying the motion, Manglona said it is irrelevant that Waibel is no longer complaining of fraud and economic duress, as he did in a lawsuit filed in California.

Manglona said Waibel claimed for indemnity and contribution in the California case, just as he claims for them in this case.

"There is no legal basis to argue he [Waibel] has abandoned those claims," Manglona said. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)



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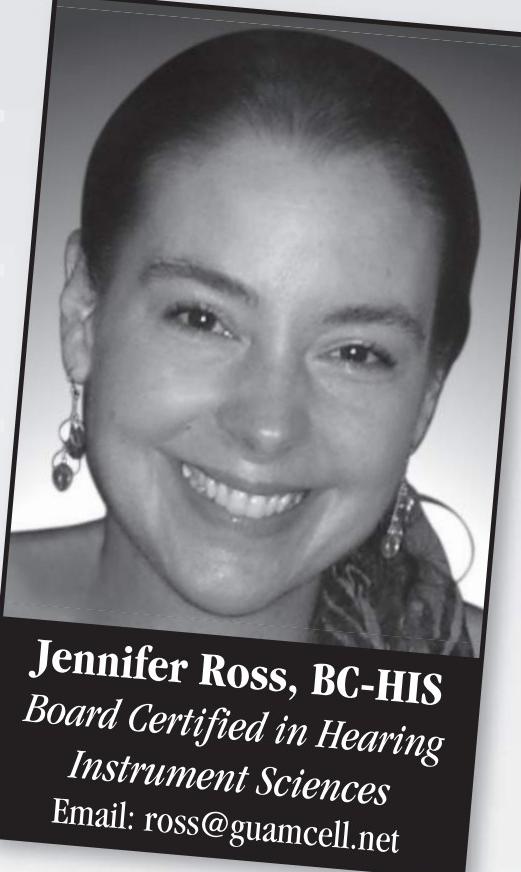
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Specializing in:

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- Saturday February 4th 9:00am - 3:00pm
at Marianas Medical Center in Garapan

All interested patients should call Marianas Medical Clinic for scheduling

234-3925/7

Insurance accepted: AETNA and Medicaid



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Hearing
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NOTICE OF PROPOSED LEASE OF PUBLIC LAND

In accordance with Section 106 (b) of Public Law 15-2, the Department of Public Lands hereby gives notice of its intent to lease certain public lands in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Any interested parties of the general public may submit comments, data, views, or arguments of alternative proposals for the lease of the public land. As further provided by Public Law 15-2, the following pertinent information is required to be published.

i. The proposed lease of public land is described as Lot No. 237 E 02, containing an area of approximately 5,751 square meters, more or less, situated in Lower Base, Saipan. A copy of the location of the parcel is available at the Department of Public Lands for inspection.

ii. The prospective lessee is Marianas Meat Harvesting Corporation. The Directors of the Corporation are Mr. Joseph Borja, Mr. Anthony Pellegrino, and Mr. Paul Zak.

The Officers of the Corporation area Mr. Joseph Borja - President, Mr. Anthony Pellegrino - Treasurer, and Mr. Paul Zak - Secretary / Vice President.

iii. The proposed lease was negotiated by Mr. Joseph Borja and Mr. Anthony Pellegrino.

iv. The lessee shall use the premises solely for the purpose of developing and operating a USDA certified meat slaughtering facility and related activities.

The term of the proposed lease agreement is 25 years, with an option to extend the lease for an additional 15 years. The proposed annual rental during the term is based on a percentage of the appraised fair market value of the property.

v. A copy of the proposed lease agreement may be obtained at the office of the Department of Public Lands, located on the 2nd floor of the Joeten Dandan Commercial Building in Dandan, Saipan; Songsong Village, Rota; or the 1st floor of the Kings Commercial Building, Tinian.

vi. The Department of Public Lands has received no alternative proposals to lease the subject public land in Lower, Saipan.

vii. The Secretary of the Department of Public Lands shall accept written comments, views, arguments or alternative proposals from interested parties on or before February 14, 2012 at the Department of Public Lands offices located in Saipan, Rota or Tinian.

NUTISIA PUT MAPROPONIN ATKILON TĀNU' PUPBLIKU

Sigun gi Seksiona 106(b) gi Lain Pupbliku 15-2, i Dipattamentun Tānu' Pupbliku guini ha nā'i nutisia ni intension-ña para u mana'ma'atkila pumalu na tānu' pupbliku siha giya Saipan, Commonwealth gi Sangkattan na Islas Marianas siha. Maseha hāyi na pattida siha gi halum i pupbliku henerāt siñā ha na'hālum i imfotmasiñon, opionon, pat testamoñun kinentra siha gi tinahguin propositu siha ni para i atkilon tānu' pupbliku. Sigi mās mo'na mapribeniyi ginin i Lain Pupbliku 15-2, i tinattitiyi pettanesin imfotmasiñon ni madimānda ni debi na u mapupblika.

i. I maproponi na atkilon tānu' pupbliku ha diskribi kumu Lot No. 237 E 02, ni kinonsisti åria kāsi guaha 5,751 square meters, mās pat menus, ni gaigi giya Lower Base, Saipan. I kopian i lugāt gaigi gi pumalu na gumuaha gi Dipattamentun Tānu' Pupbliku siha ni para i rikunosimentu.

ii. I manatkikila i Marianas Meat Harvesting Corporation . I Direktot i Corporation siha si Siñot Joseph Borja, Siñot Anthony Pellegrino, yan si Siñot Paul Zak.

I Ufisiālis siha gi årian Corporation si Siñot Joseph Borja - Presidenti , si Siñot Anthony Pellegrino - i Tresureru, yan si Siñot Paul Zak - Sekritariu /Sigundu Presidenti.

iii. I maproponi na atkilon manigosiu gi as Siñot Joseph Borja yan Siñot Anthony Pellegrino.

iv. I manatkikila debi na u usa i lugāt solamenti para hinangai developing yan operating i fasilitāt i USDA certified meat slaughtering yan i mana'achuli' na aktibidāt siha.

I teman i maproponi na kuntrātan atkilon sa' 25 åñus, yan option para u ma'ekstendi i atkilon gi ta'lū 15 åñus.

I maproponi na åpas atkilon gi sakkan gi durāntin i tema sigun gi percentage gi appraised fair market value gi propiedāt, ingklusu i prisenti na estroktura.

v. Kopian i manmaproponi na kontrātan atkilon siña machuli' gi ufisinan i Dipattamentun Tānu' Pupbliku siha, gaigi gi sigundu bibienda 2nd floor gi Joeten Dandan Commercial Building giya Dandan, Saipan; gi Songsong Village, Luta; pat i primet 1st bibienda gi Kings Commercial Building, Tinian.

vi. I Dipattamentun Tanu' Pupbliku siha tāya' na ha risibi tinahguin propositu siha para sinuhetun atkilon tanu' pupbliku siha giya Lower Base, Saipan.

vii. I Sekritariun i Dipattamentun Tanu' Pupbliku siha debi na u aksepta i tinigi' i imfotmasiñon, opionon yan testamoñun kinentra pat tinahguin propositu siha ginin i manggai interes na pattida siha gi pat åntis di Fibreru 14, 2012 gi ufisinan Dipattamentun Tānu' Pupbliku siha ni gaigi Saipan, Luta, pat Tinian.

ARONGORONG REEL POMWOL AKKILONUL FALÚWEER TOULAP

Sángi Tálil ye 106(b) mellól Alléghul Toulap 15-2, Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap, ekke atotoowow ammataf igha ebwe akkilaló eghús faluw mellól Seipel, Commonwealth Téel Falúwasch Marianas. Schóókka remuschál emwal rebwe isisilong yaar māngemáng, data awewe, me angjiing reel pomwol akkilonul falúweer toulap. Sengi Alléghul Toulap ye 15-2, ebwal ayoora, lamal awewe kka rebwe mweiti ngáli milikka ebwe akkatééló.

i. Pomwol akkilonul falúweer toulap nge ekke bwáári Lot No. 237 E. 02, eyor Limwoow Sangaras, Fisabwughúw limeigh me eew laapal(5,751 square meters) elapeló me ngáre eghús, elo Lower Base, Seipel. Tilighial bwuley yeel nge eyor mereel Bwulasiyool Falúweer Toulap(Public Lands) ngáre óubwe ghuley fischiy.

ii. Schéschéel schóól akkilón nge Marianas Meat Harvesting Corporation. Direkktoodol Corporation yel nge Mr. Joseph Borja, Mr. Anthony Pellegrino me Mr. Paul Zak.

Schóól officers il Corporation yel nge Mr. Joseph Borja-President, Mr. Anthony Pellegrino-Treasurer, me Mr. Paul Zak-Secretary/Vice President

iii. Schóól aweweey akkilón yel nge Mr. Joseph Borja me Mr. Anthony Pellegrino

iv. Schóól akkilón ebwe yáyá faluw yeel rel ebwe ayoora me angaanga eew leliyal lil maal iye USDA certified me bwal akkaw mwóghutugħut.

Tool aighúghul pomwol akkilón nge reweigh me limoow ráagh (25 years). Emmwel rebwe bwal sóóbwey ngáli seigh me limoow ráagh (15 years).

Pomwol méel akkilón nge ebwe mwiril sángi percentage il yaal appraised fair market value il faluw.

v. Tilighial akkilón yeel nge emmwel óubwe bwughi merel bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap, elo aruwoval pwó (2nd floor) me Joeten Dandan Commercial Building llól Tuturam, Seipél; Songsong village, Luuta; me ngáre mmwal pwó (1st floor) mellól Kings Commercial Building, Tchúluyóöl.

vi. Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap nge esáál bweibwogh mwo pomwol akkilón ye elo Lower Base, Seipél.

vii. Samwoolul Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap nge ebwe bwughi ischil māngemáng, ainqingil merel amweyút mmwal Febrero 14, 2012 mellól Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap iye elo Seipél, Luuta, ngare Tchúluyóöl.

Mount Carmel celebrates Catholic Schools Week

CLARISSA V. DAVID

School president Margaret dela Cruz poses with the school's 2012 Teacher of the Year awardee Delfina Muña and the two other nominees, Filmah Buenaflo and Zita Sablan.

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Mount Carmel School, the only Catholic school on Saipan, held an appreciation program yesterday to recognize the contributions of its faculty and staff as part of Catholic Schools Week celebration from Jan. 29 to Feb. 3.

Students trooped to the school's gymnasium where the faculty and staff were presented with certificates and leis.

They are Delfina Muña, Ma. Zita Sablan, Shirley Dueñas, Carmen Agulto, Ariadne Snodgrass, Naomi Ada, Frances Taimanao, Vicky Borja, Candida Bahillo, Teresita Zulaybar, Francis San Nicolas, Rosiky Camacho, Luz Baldazo, Filmah Buenaflo, Lourdes Menidiola, Bobby Baldazo, Manny Borja, Galvin Deleon Guerrero, Celso Magbanua, Danilo Chan, Marilou Carlos, Joe Quitugua, Fermina Benavente, Tobed Smith, Louise Concepcion, and Margaret Dela Cruz.

Title I Program instructors and coordinators who were also recognized are Joaquina Salas, Elia Leon Guerrero, Sapuro Rayphand, Francisco Tomokane, Anicia Cabrera, Justo Quitugua, Tina Uchel, Juan Babauta, and Susan Babauta.

Perfect Attendance Awards covering the period from Aug. 11, 2011, to Jan. 10, 2012, were given out to Carmen Agulto, Candida Bahillo, Luz Baldazo, Marilou Carlos, Delfina Muña, Ariadne Snodgrass, and Margaret Dela Cruz.

School president Margaret dela Cruz said that a panel of three judges evaluated the three nominees.

"Here at Mount Carmel School,

CUC sets power outage this Saturday

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. has scheduled a power interruption this Saturday Feb. 4, 2012, from 7am to 11am.

The purpose of the power interruption is to allow the power distribution crews to work safely on the high voltage power lines as they perform systems maintenance on the Kiya 1 and Kiya 2 circuits. The linemen will replace 75 deteriorated steel pole top pins with new anti-corrosive ones on the first partial of Kiya 1 and Kiya 2.

Areas affected include the Chalan Kiya substation, Dr. Torres Reservoir, NMC, residence along Chalan Msgr. Guerrero Rd. toward San Vicente (former Adventure Store), Chalan Tun Antonio Apa, W8 lift station, DD Water Well-3, Kannat Tabla, Kannat Tabla booster and reservoir, Joeten Dandan, and the Shell Dandan gas station.

In addition, two air break switches will also be maintained, one on Kiya 1 second

partial near Torres Refrigeration and the other on Kiya 2 second partial near the Shell Dandan gas station. The repair of these switches will allow the linemen to isolate problematic areas to be repaired. The power will be restored in these areas at 8am.

"CUC apologizes for any inconvenience this power interruption may have on the community and will work diligently to minimize future interruptions." (CUC)

Rotary urges elementary schools to join Parade of Books

»Only 2 schools have signed up so far

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Rotary Club of Saipan is urging all elementary schools in the CNMI to take part in the 8th Annual Parade of Books slated for April 14 at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

Rotarian and parade coordinator Reina Camacho disclosed yesterday only two schools have so

far signed up for the competition.

Dandan Elementary School, which won the Most Spirit Award last year, will be interpreting *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein, while Koblerville Elementary School, which bagged second place, will portray *Corduroy* by Don Freeman.

"Invitations have been sent to public schools and previous Parade of Books coordinators;

however, there have not been inquiries from private schools," Camacho told *Saipan Tribune*.

Camacho said they are encouraging private schools to take part in the annual event, which encourages literacy and creativity and instills the importance of reading among the islands' youth in a fun and innovative way.

The educational competition is open to all public and private

elementary schools, which will be asked to act out their chosen book for a chance to win prizes.

This year, Camacho said that schools are asked to choose from a selected list of books that reflect the values and principles of Rotary like service above self, trust, honesty, fairness, and friendship, among others.

Schools can pick from at least 90 titles, some of which are available at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library in Susupe.

Length of performances is

limited from 3 to 5 minutes, with deduction to be given to schools that exceed the maximum time. The number of students allowed to perform is from five to 35 students only.

Camacho noted that they will not allow comic book superheroes or licensed characters and elaborate face makeup—the students should be able to put on their own costumes.

Camacho said they will be conducting their first orientation meeting for all schools, coach-

es, teachers, and other interested individuals today, Feb. 1, at 5:30pm at the MHS gym where interested schools may submit their registration forms.

"Deadline to register is March 31, 2012; however, to ensure that another school does not perform the same book, it is best to submit registration forms to 'reserve' a book," said Camacho.

For more information, contact Camacho at 664-8512, email reinacamacho@gmail.com or saipanrotary@gmail.com.

MBA student vies for presidential scholars program

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A senior at Marianas Baptist Academy will be competing with students across the U.S. for the prestigious 2012 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program.

Jessica Im Lee is the only candidate from the CNMI selected for the program under the U.S. Department of Education.

Established in 1964, the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program aims to recognize and honor some of the nation's most distinguished graduating high school seniors. Each year, up to 141 students are named as presidential scholars, one of the country's highest honors for high school students. Majority of the scholars are selected based on broad academic achievement while a number are selected on the basis of academic and artistic scholar-

ship in the visual arts, the performing arts, or creative writing.

A review committee composed of experienced individuals in secondary and postsecondary education will trim the pool down to 560 semifinalists.

The commission on presidential scholars will then select up to 121 academic scholars and up to 20 arts scholars in April. Those chosen will be honored for their accomplishments and will meet with government of-

ficials and educators, among others, during National Recognition Week in Washington, D.C. in June.

"I was really happy when I found out about it," said Lee, 17, who was informed about being selected

for the program when she received the mail Monday.

Lee, who arrived on island when she was in third grade, has been joining various competitions in the CNMI such as Math Court and National Forensic

League. She plans to attend college in the U.S. mainland this fall and study international relations. "As I was living here and when I experienced going to the U.S. for some competitions, I realized that there's a bigger part so I wanted to experience more cultures and study about them and what's outside of Saipan."

Lee has already been accepted to Georgetown University, University of Chicago, and Boston College Honors Program and she is still waiting for acceptance to several other Ivy League schools.

The daughter of Jung Hye Lee and the late Yong Jin Lee, the younger Lee said she is excited yet hesitant to go to college "because my mom won't be living with me and I would have to be there alone. I have my sister there. She's the only one there."

Lee gave credit to MBA principal Ramiro H. Trinidad, her Algebra teacher during 7th and 8th grades, and all her other teachers who have helped her in her studies.

"I couldn't have done this without them," she told *Saipan Tribune*. "All the things they taught me, that's how I got good grades."

Trinidad said they have had several students who were previously chosen as program candidates, given the school's "very rigid and demanding" training for students to excel in their fields.

"The teachers are dedicated and committed. Students expect that they'll be accepted to good universities," he said.

Trinidad described Lee as a "very eloquent and fluent speaker, very dedicated, and a good leader."

"She's an outstanding student—one of the few in my career as an educator. I'm thankful that MBA students always bring honor to the academy," added Trinidad.

Celebrate Valentine's Day with 'Latin Heart Dance'

Celebrate Valentine's Day with an evening of samba and salsa when the Rose Dance School brings to the community "Latin Heart Dance."

The event is slated for Feb. 10, Friday, from 8pm to 12:30am at the Rose Dance School studio on the second floor of Canton Restaurant along Beach Road in Garapan.

Tickets to the event cost \$15 each and include one drink and free dance.

Carol Wong Chan, who co-manages the family-owned dance school, said they want to observe Valentine's Day by encouraging residents to learn ballroom dancing and do the cha-cha, mambo, rumba, merengue, samba, and paso doble, among others.

Sweating it out on the dance floor is a good and healthy way to celebrate Valentine's Day, said Chan.

Guests can also look forward to invigorating dance performances by Rose Dance School students under the direction of instructor Resty Joson.

"We are inviting the community to join us as we celebrate Valentine's Day through Latin Heart Dance on Feb. 10," Chan told *Saipan Tribune*.

To buy tickets or for more information, call 233-7236. (Clarissa V. David)



Lee

You are invited to compete during

GRAND OPENING OF DRIVING RANGE

Saturday, Feb. 04, 2012

**Longest Drive & Chipping Contest
Competition starts from 4pm to 9pm**

Categories:

1. Men open
2. Ladies open

Entry Fee: \$10.00

Prizes for TOP 3 per Category

1. Longest Drive

1st - 15 Golf Coupon each

2nd - 10 Golf Coupon each

3rd - 5 Golf Coupon each

2. Chipping Contest

Wedges for the Top 3 winners

**One Golf coupon each for 200 yards plus (Men) and 180 yards plus (Ladies)
...some conditions applies...**

**Food & Drinks will be ON SALE... HAPPY HOUR from 4pm to 9pm
for more information, please call 236-8840**



Jan. 6: Start date for reapportionment plan

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

While Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and lawmakers now agree to a Jan. 6 start of the 120-day timeline for coming up with a reapportionment/redistricting plan instead of Aug. 24, they still want to wait for the attorney general's opinion on the matter.

During Friday's closed-door meeting between the governor and lawmakers, the governor indicated that he has no problem

identifying Jan. 6 as the start of the 120-day period for the Legislature to come up with its plan, said press secretary Angel Demapan yesterday.

But Demapan said should the attorney general's opinion conclude that the 120-day period started on Aug. 24—which would mean the Legislature lost its chance to come up with a reapportionment/redistricting plan—the Fitial administration would listen to lawmakers' concerns and rec-

ommendations.

Rep. Joseph Palacios (R-Saipan), author of a pending initiative seeking to reduce the number of Saipan lawmakers in the House from 18 to nine, said yesterday he's looking forward to the AG's opinion, expected to be issued this week.

If both the Legislature and the governor fail to come up with their reapportionment/redistricting plan as required by the Constitution after release of census results every

10 years, then any registered voter could petition the court to do so.

Some House members cautioned their colleagues and the governor against jumping to conclusion that a 22.7-percent decrease in Saipan's population is the only basis for cutting the number of House members.

Palacios's initiative is now under review by the Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations.

USDA unveils changes to meals served in schools

FAIRFAX, Va.—First lady Michelle Obama and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack unveiled this week new standards for school meals that will result in healthier meals for kids across the nation. The new meal requirements will raise standards for the first time in more than 15 years and improve the health and nutrition of nearly 32 million kids that participate in school meal programs every school day.

The healthier meal requirements are a key component of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, which was championed by the first lady as part of her Let's Move! campaign and signed

into law by President Obama.

"As parents, we try to prepare decent meals, limit how much junk food our kids eat, and ensure they have a reasonably balanced diet," said the first lady. "And when we're putting in all that effort the last thing we want is for our hard work to be undone each day in the school cafeteria. When we send our kids to school, we expect that they won't be eating the kind of fatty, salty, sugary foods that we try to keep them from eating at home. We want the food they get at school to be the same kind of food we would serve at our own kitchen tables."

"Improving the quality of the school meals is a critical step in building a healthy future for our kids," said Vilsack. "When it comes to our children, we must do everything possible to provide them the nutrition they need to be healthy, active and ready to face the future. Today we take an important step toward that goal."

The final standards make the same kinds of practical changes that many parents are already encouraging at home, including:

- Ensuring students are offered both fruits and vegetables every day of the week;
- Substantially increasing offerings of whole grain-rich foods;

■ Offering only fat-free or low-fat milk varieties;

- Limiting calories based on the age of children being served to ensure proper portion size; and
- Increasing the focus on reducing the amounts of saturated fat, trans fats and sodium.

USDA built the new rule around recommendations from a panel of experts convened by the Institute of Medicine, a gold standard for evidence-based health analysis. The standards were also updated with key changes from the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. (**USDA**)

A healthy mouth for your baby

By LORI I. SERNA RDH, MED
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

February is Children's dental health month. In an effort to reach out to the community the Seventh-day Adventist Dental Clinic, in conjunction with the *Saipan Tribune*, will print four articles related to children's oral health.

Many parents wonder how soon they should start to care for their baby's teeth. The answer is before the baby is even born. What you eat when you are pregnant is important. Eating right will help you and your growing baby stay healthy. Follow your doctor's advice and eat the right food and take vitamins. This is also a good talk to your doctor about breastfeeding.

A good time to start taking care of your children's oral health is when you give your baby the first bath. Even though your child has no teeth at this time, there is a white film already on the gums and tongue. This white film contains bacteria. By cleaning the baby's gums with a washcloth, you are getting rid of the white film that contains plaque as well as getting the child used to having her/his mouth cleaned on a regular basis. As soon as teeth do come in, clean the teeth with a clean, soft cloth or a baby's toothbrush. Clean the teeth at least twice a day. It is best to clean them after every feeding.

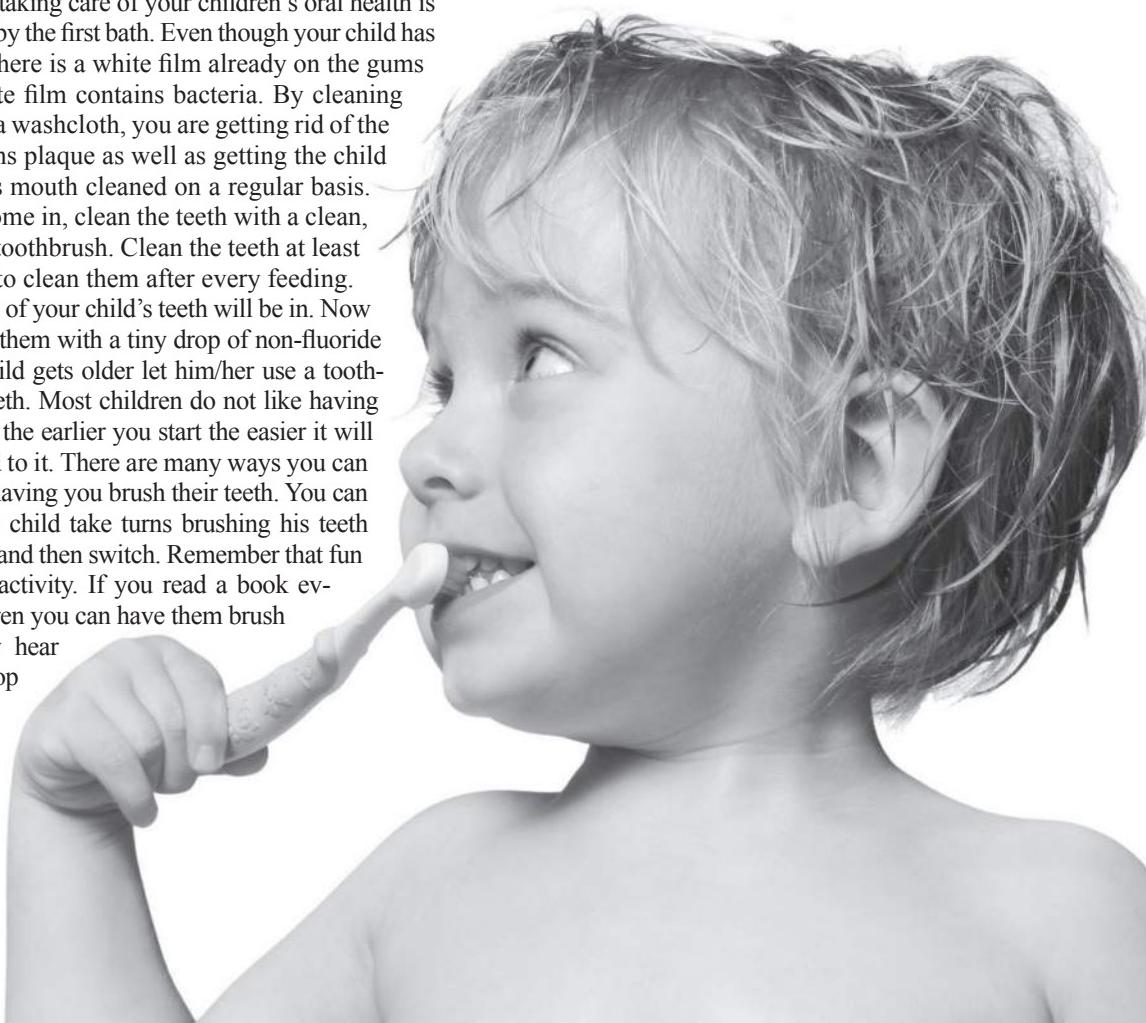
At about age 2, most of your child's teeth will be in. Now you can start brushing them with a tiny drop of non-fluoride toothpaste. As your child gets older let him/her use a toothbrush to brush their teeth. Most children do not like having their teeth brushed but the earlier you start the easier it will be for them to get used to it. There are many ways you can help your child enjoy having you brush their teeth. You can play a game; have the child take turns brushing his teeth while you brush yours and then switch. Remember that fun should be part of the activity. If you read a book every night to your children you can have them brush their teeth while they hear the story and if they stop brushing then you stop reading; this is what we do at home and

► Most children do not like having their teeth brushed but the earlier you start the easier it will be for them to get used to it.

it seems to work really well with older children.

Most of all, remember that children learn from experience. If children grow up watching their parents take care of their teeth by brushing and flossing often the children will do the same. It is also helpful to talk to your children about the bacteria that live in our mouth. Letting them know that just as we shower our bodies, we need to "shower" our teeth.

If you have any questions regarding your child's oral health please feel free to call the SDA dental clinic at 234-6323. For the month of February as a celebration of Children's Dental Health month the SDA dental clinic will be offering free dental exams to all the children of the CNMI. Call today!



Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Feb. 1, 1999

Sablan: Hiked fees a damper on tourism

The expected influx of tourist arrivals on the island may not happen this year after the Commonwealth Ports Authority juked the proposal of the Aviation Task Force and the Marianas Visitors Authority to reduce by 50 percent the landing fees to lure new airlines provide service to the commonwealth. "It is our best chance to convince the airlines to come here but we may just witness the death of our tourism economy," said MVA board chairman Dave M. Sablan. In fact, he said airlines have threatened to downsize operations by using smaller type of aircraft once the ports authority pushes through with the planned rate increase of airport fees.

More doctors coming to the CNMI

The National Health Service Corps will deploy four more doctors and three nurse practitioners on the island to ease the shortage of medical professionals in the Northern Marianas, according to Health Secretary Joseph Kevin Villagomez. The NHSC will shoulder the salaries of the doctors—two obstetrician/gynecologists, a pediatrician and a family practitioner—and nurses. It will also pay for the cost of relocation of the person and his family members. The NHSC is a program under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "We put out an application and they [NHSC] gave us a list of physicians that we can contact and see if they are still available to come up here. NHSC will pay for their site visit here," Villagomez said.

Feb. 1, 2000

Fed money eyed to fund street-naming project

The CNMI government is eyeing federal money to fund the setting up of street signs in Saipan's major thoroughfares and secondary roads which has been derailed for several years due to financial constraints and controversy surrounding the use of Chamorro and Carolinian names. Saipan Mayor Jose Sablan said the CNMI Department of Public Works is already gathering necessary documents to finalize the local government's application for a grant under the Federal Highway Administration. "We have been told that there are some federal money that will be made available [for the street-naming project] by the Federal Highway Administration. They are working on that right now with DPW," Mr. Sablan told reporters.

Govt anticipates more cuts in spending

The CNMI government is anticipating its total expenditures to be lower in 1999 compared to previous years, as finance managers finalize reports on reduction in the Commonwealth's bureaucracy which had grown so big during the previous administration. The Department of Finance earlier disclosed that the government slashed expenses on leased vehicle by \$600,000, from \$2 million in FY 1998 to \$1.4 million in FY 1999, representing a 28 percent reduction in government spending on leased vehicles. Finance officials said it will monitor strict compliance on the governor's call to further trim government expenses in light of declining revenues.

Feb. 1, 2001

Doctor shortage hinders operation of public clinic

The Department of Public Health has suspended indefinitely the operation of a community clinic in San Antonio village until it is able to address problems on the apparent shortage of medical practitioners on the island. A media statement signed by Public Health Secretary Joseph Kevin P. Villagomez disclosed that all public health services at the South Community Health clinic in San Antonio was suspended effective Jan. 29, 2001. Mr. Villagomez claimed that the absence of a full time physician to attend to ailing residents triggered the suspension of the clinic's operation.

Tighter policy in place to prevent fake claims

The NMI Retirement Fund has implemented a stricter measure to prevent possible recurrence of fraudulent health claims following the controversial Megaplus International CNMI, Inc. case in 1999. Group Health and Life Insurance Program manager Dolores Moore ordered all government health insurance subscribers to submit pertinent requirements when applying for a reimbursement. In a memorandum, Ms. Moore instructed program subscribers and GHLIP personnel to consistently check submitted claims and bills filed by their clients in efforts to prevent cases of mishandled payments of medical bills.

Tinian to celebrate 8th hot pepper festival in Feb.

Need a stay-cation? Book your Presidents' Day weekend in Tinian for the 8th Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 18-19, 2012.

The annual celebration held in honor of donni sali, a small but potent hot pepper that is indigenous to the island, offers the perfect blend of island partying at the festival grounds and quiet

escape at isolated beaches and backroads.

Activities at Tachogna Beach will include cooking competitions, indigenous craft sales, and live entertainment including cultural dances and Hapi The Clown. Sample a variety of local dishes, catch the umang (hermit crab) races, join numer-

ous sports activities (including beach volleyball and dragon boat races), or join the donni sali eating competition itself.

"As always, the community is ready to welcome all visitors to this year's Tinian Hot Pepper Festival," said MVA Community Projects manager Martin Duenas. "The festival is a great opportu-

nity to meet up with old family members, make new friends, and just enjoy a good weekend at the beach, island style. The holiday weekend makes it the perfect time to visit."

The historical treasures of Tinian include ancient Chamorro limestone pillars called Taga stones (within walking distance

of the festival), to relics from the Japanese era of administration of the islands, to World War II ruins.

Tinian is accessible within minutes of Saipan via airplane or via connecting flights from Rota and Guam. For more information, contact the MVA Tinian office at 1.670.433.9365 or email at vborja@mymarianas.com. (MVA)

Pacific communities better able to save reef fisheries with info sheets

Sea cucumbers, lobsters and other fish species are in danger of disappearing from Pacific island fisheries unless they are protected by villagers and local fishermen through measures recommended by a new series of information sheets.

Actions such as reducing or stopping the use of SCUBA to fish for such species are some of the measures recommended in 16 information sheets, especially targeted at Pacific Communities, and being launched today in Suva, Fiji.

The sheets, developed by scientists and managers from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the Locally-Managed Marine Area Network, are in response to the urgent need to protect the region's coastal fisheries in the face of projected climate change impacts and increasing population growth.

The Pacific population is predicted to increase by 50 per cent by 2030 and already many reef systems are struggling from intense fishing pressure.

SPC research indicates that tropical Pacific reef fish populations could decline by up to 20 per cent by 2050 and up to 50 per cent by 2100. Climate change will affect fish population distribution and numbers as rising sea temperatures reduces the food available to reef fish

and changes the timing and success of fish reproduction.

Most coastal communities in the Pacific rely on reef fisheries for food, and fewer fish in their catches will increase the gap between available fish and the protein needed for their food security.

The average annual consumption of fish per person (including shellfish) by coastal Pacific populations ranges from 30–118 kilograms in Melanesia, 62–115 kilograms in Micronesia, and 50–146 kilograms in Polynesia. This is

ready in place in Fiji have proven successful, as Pio Radikedike, site manager for Veratavou, Viti Levu in Fiji reports.

"We have increased the number of MPAs [closed areas] in our village because the communities, the chiefs, have seen the benefits from what we have been doing. Now we have three—two on the mudflats near my village for the clams and other small species, and one on the reefs for fish and sea cucumbers, not only for my village, but for the benefit of the whole district."

Dr Hugh Govan, advisor for the LMMA Network, said the combination of local community knowledge and scientific research is invaluable.

significantly more than the annual consumption globally of just 17 kilograms per person.

"It's good to have something ready for our next generation. I see that there's plenty of fish, but we know that it takes many years for the growth of the coral and for fishes to give birth," said Kini Ravonoloa, Votua Village Chief and FLMMA representative for Koroleviwai. "My advice is that we should keep a place protected for the fishes and other organisms that they live in the sea to have more time to reproduce."

Management programs al-

"Communities in the Pacific are well placed to manage their own fisheries as they still usually have traditional and local knowledge of their areas and resources. In fact over 400 communities are known to be managing their inshore areas in the Pacific," he said. "However, communities gain much from access to scientific information on aspects of biology and ecology or experiences of communities elsewhere to help improve their management practices in the face of emerging modern challenges."

The information sheets

will be distributed to communities across the Pacific.

Funding for the printing and distribution of the information sheets was provided by the European Union-funded SciCOFish (scientific support for the management of coastal and oceanic fisheries in the Pacific Islands re-

gion) project.

"What is unique about these sheets is that, together, the SPC and LMMA Network are trying to get a consistent message to all Pacific communities in terms of resource management," said Ian Bertram, Coastal Fisheries Science and Management Adviser for the SPC. (SPC)

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Happy 6th birthday to Eitram Chowdhury, who celebrates his special day today, Feb. 1! This shoutout comes from mom Emu and dad Shammy.

ON THE NET

The information sheets can be downloaded from: <http://www.spc.int/coastfish/en/component/content/article/393-guide-and-information-sheets-for-fishing-communities.html>

protect the region's coastal fisheries in the face of projected climate change impacts and increasing population growth.

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SPC research indicates that tropical Pacific reef fish populations could decline by up to 20 per cent by 2050 and up to 50 per cent by 2100. Climate change will affect fish population distribution and numbers as rising sea temperatures reduces the food available to reef fish

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp
Website: <http://www.nmhc.gov.mp>

INVITATION FOR BID
(This ad is paid for by NMHC with HUD funds.)

BID SUBMISSION DATE: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2012 * TIME: 10:00 AM
NMHC IFB 2012-001

"CONSTRUCTION OF PERIMETER PATHWAY FOR SINAPALO CHILDREN'S PARK"

Proposal packets will be available on February 1, 2012, at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, and NMHC's Rota Field Office, Rota, during regular working hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday thru Friday except CNMI holidays. A non-refundable payment of Fifty Dollars (\$50.00) is required for each set. Payment shall be by cash, credit card, money order or cashier's check (payable to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation).

A mandatory pre-bid conference will be held at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 9, 2012, at the proposed project site located in Sinapalo, Rota, and all interested bidders will be given the opportunity to walk through the proposed site, familiarize themselves with the required work and ask questions regarding the project. Attendance at this conference and site visit are considered essential to the bidders' understanding of the project elements and a company that does not have a representative in attendance at the pre-bid conference will be considered as a non-responsive bidder.

This project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), under its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding.

/s/ Marcie M. Tomokane
Board Chairwoman & Contracting Officer

/s/ Herman S. Sablan, Director
Division of Procurement & Supply

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Website: <http://www.nmhc.gov.mp>

INVITATION FOR BID
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BID SUBMISSION DATE: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2012 * TIME: 10:00 AM
NMHC IFB 2012-002

"ADA Compliance Retrofit of the Marianas Medical Referral Center (MMRC)"

Proposal packets will be available on February 1, 2012, at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, during regular working hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday thru Friday except CNMI holidays. A non-refundable payment of Fifty Dollars (\$50.00) is required for each set. Payment shall be by cash, credit card, money order or cashier's check (payable to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation).

A mandatory pre-bid conference will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, February 8, 2012, at the proposed project site located in As Lito, Saipan, and all interested bidders will be given the opportunity to walk through the proposed site, familiarize themselves with the required work and ask questions regarding the project. Attendance at this conference and site visit are considered essential to the bidders' understanding of the project elements and a company that does not have a representative in attendance at the pre-bid conference will be considered as a non-responsive bidder.

This project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), under its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding.

/s/ Marcie M. Tomokane
Board Chairwoman & Contracting Officer

/s/ Herman S. Sablan, Director
Division of Procurement & Supply

Notice of Zoning Board Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the Zoning Board will be held on Wednesday, February 15, 2012 at 5:00 PM, Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten DanDan Commercial Bldg., Saipan

A. Preliminary Matters

- Call to Order
- Roll Call
- Adoption of Agenda
- Adoption of January 5, 2012 minutes
- Public Comments (not related to files for discussion under item B. Public Hearings)

B. Public Hearings

- Conditional Use Application #2011-2880: Mr. Jae Yeol Lim of Greenstar Corporation is proposing to operate a "zipline" adventure and amusement designed to enable users to travel from top to bottom of inclined cables to be supported by wooden towers. This proposal will be located on public lands in Gualo Rai on lots TR#33-6, lot #040 F 06, TR# 33-8, and Lot #137 F 02. These areas are zoned as Rural.

C. Communications/ Reports

D. Old Business.

None

E. New Business.

- Update on the proposed Saipan Zoning Law of 2012
- Office operations report

F. Executive (Closed) Session.

G. Miscellaneous: Other Matters, Announcements, Next Meeting, Adjourn.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the Board meeting, or if you require assistance, please contact Therese T. Ogumoro, Acting Zoning Administrator, at 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & 10 CMC 3511, et seq.).

/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Zoning Board Chairman

NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING for Greenstar Corporation

The public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board public hearing on this request for a Conditional Use permit. Mr. Jae Yeol Lim of Greenstar Corporation is proposing to operate a "zipline" adventure and amusement designed to enable users to travel from top to bottom of inclined cables to be supported by wooden towers. This proposal will be located on public lands in Gualo Rai on lots TR#33-6, lot #040 F 06, TR# 33-8, and Lot #137 F 02. These areas are zoned as Rural.

Date: February 15, 2012, Wednesday

Time: 5:00 pm

Place: Zoning Board Conference Room, 2nd flr,
Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan

The above application may be viewed at the Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan. Comments on the projects may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments shall be submitted in writing to the Zoning Office no later than 4:30pm, February 14, 2012. Written comments may also be submitted via email to therese.ogumoro@zoning.gov.mp, via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950 or delivered to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & Division 3 of Title 10 CMC).

/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Board Chairman

Opinion

Saipan Tribune

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Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Egypt's heavy-handed military

When Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was overthrown last year, there was immediate concern in Washington about the future of U.S. relations with Egypt. Mubarak, though a tyrant, had been a reliable ally, which explained why the Obama administration temporized about whether he should step down. Once he was gone and a supposedly transitional military council promised elections, a new concern arose: that the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist groups would dominate a new elected government and—in the worst-case scenario—renounce the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli treaty.

A year later the treaty is intact and the political party linked to the Muslim Brotherhood, which won the most seats in the parliament, is not agitating for its renunciation. But Egyptian-American relations are threatened from another quarter: military leaders who still seem wedded to the old ways. They have launched a campaign of harassment against nongovernmental agencies that promote democracy.

Police in December raided 17 such organizations, including the U.S.-funded International Republican Institute, Freedom House and the National Democratic Institute, as well as various foreign and local groups, confiscating records and computers. Last week it was reported that at least half a dozen Americans working for the NGOs, including the son of Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, had been prevented from leaving Egypt. Supposedly they are being detained as part of an investigation of whether NGOs failed to obtain required licenses from the government. More likely, the military objected to their contacts with democratic activists. Military leaders have claimed that “foreign hands” are responsible for instability in the country.

The Obama administration has reacted with appropriate forcefulness to the crackdown. The president reminded Egypt’s military leader, Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, that Congress has conditioned continued military aid on progress toward democracy; that warning was then reiterated publicly by a State Department official. Egypt receives \$1.3 billion a year in military aid from the U.S., primarily to shore up its commitment to peace with Israel. Notwithstanding that linkage, resentment against Egypt is growing in Congress.

It would be tempting but naive to think that the Egyptian military’s policies are temporary just because it has promised to transfer power to the parliament and a president to be elected in June. Even with elections and a new constitution, the military is expected to retain considerable power. If it wants to retain close—and lucrative—ties with the United States, it will allow space for democratic organizations to help build a new Egypt—or face the political consequences.

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Mamma Mia

I am using my visit to my 91-year-old mother in Honolulu as a pretext to our use of the Italian all-purpose interjection: Mamma Mia! An interjection is usually elicited by an incidence of surprise from an event that occasions an intrusion of the unexpected, the unsynchronous, and the discontinuous.

Having lived on and off Honolulu for the last 30 years, I did not think anything in the island of Oahu would come as a surprise. Surprise comes when we assume logic or what is reasonable is the ruling principle in life. A day trip into Honolulu turned up to be a day of surprises.

We’ve watched the spectacular transformation of Victoria Island in Hong Kong, from the previously woody environs of inconspicuous but rich Puk Fu Lam Road and the previously ticky-tacky buildings of varied entrepreneurial ventures on Repulse Bay in the ’70s, to the now cosmopolitan island gem of China anchoring the Pearl River basin since its return from British rule, and we have a pretty objective picture of the external changes, warts and all, that comes with “progress.”

More than a decade ago, when commuting to WorkHawaii downtown Honolulu from Ewa Beach, 20 miles on the odometer covered our distance on heavy traffic, we made it from home to office in 45 minutes tops. Last week, we had an appointment at the Immigration Office on Ala Moana of the same distance, and because H1 has added more lanes, we thought we had ample time to arrive in town early to find parking space and, perhaps, even have time to grab a bite. We left at 6:30am and we made it to the office at 8:55am on an 8:15am appointment. The traffic was unbelievably dense and slow. Happily, USCIS in Honolulu is more customer service friendly than other places of my experience.

The planned rapid rail being constructed from Kapolei to Honolulu has since earned the ire of former state governor Ben Cayetano, declared candidate for Honolulu mayor on the sole issue of stopping the rail construction. He thinks the project is too expensive and that an improved bus system would be cheaper and easier to implement.

Travel across the leeward side of the island has become a high priority that no public official can ignore, and while the rest of the world is heading high-tech on rails to move traffic, Cayetano hangs on the gas guzzling practices of the highways and roads with single occupant cars, and the time-consuming buses, all in the name of individual freedom and choice of mobility, admirable intent to the automobile industry but impractical in delaying a socially necessary deed. We said the same earlier about Los Angeles and its two cars in the garage culture.

The traffic and Pare Ben’s response was our first surprise.

The Hawaiian congregation of the Kaumakapili United Church of Christ established in the ’70s medical and dental services at Kalihi-Palama district, the predominantly Hawaiian and congested settle-

ment area of the new immigrants to Honolulu situated “across Aala creek” that is the equivalent of “across the tracks” in the American south. I went there to have my teeth checked and cleaned, last seen at the Saipan Clinic two years ago.

Kalihi-Palama Health Center provides services in general medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, family planning, health education, WIC nutrition, dental and optometry programs, case management, and behavioral/mental health. KPHC serves patients in multiple languages including Ilocano, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean, Samoan, Spanish, Laotian, Tongan, Chukese, Pohnpeian, and Kosraean.

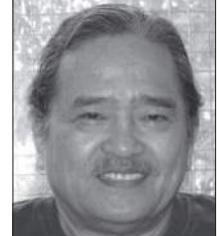
Partnered with the Institute of Human Services and River of Life Mission, it delivers health care to the area’s large homeless population, with WIC providing breastfeeding and nutrition counseling with food coupons. It is an education site for the UH Schools of Nursing, Medicine, and Social Work. It collaborates on community research projects with other health centers and associations. The Kalihi-Palama services are working examples of low-income services professionally and adequately provided by private concerns (e.g., Hawaii’s Weinburg Foundation and the nondenominational Ten Shō Kotai Jingu-Kyo Hawaii Dojo) supported by public funds.

A living rainbow coalition, Hawaii born-and-bred Stefanie of Thai extraction, and Kit Larson, DDS erstwhile of Palau, cared for my dental needs well at affordable cost. A really big surprise of unquestionable service in an age when America and the world trade in the language of suspicion and conspiracy, horror and terror, fear and trepidation!

Our last surprise was very personal: our size. I am definitely obese in China, but we are petite in Hawaii. Size is relative. Gee, even surprises are relative.

Italian Mamma Mia is Madre Mia in Spanish, but the Holy Sh*t surprise on the no-brainer rail issue is carried by my other political Uncle Ben, OMG is pretty appropriate on KPHC’s existences and service, and a Pinoy JesusMariaJose, with the sign of the cross and a clutch on the rosary beads, can only be the proper response on my size.

As to my Mama Mia/Cara Mia, that will have to be another reflection.



EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

A labyrinth with no exit

I quit my fulltime job two months ago so I can attend to the special needs of my 18-year-old son, who has autism. I have since taken trips to at least seven agencies in my attempts to get him into a special program. Some of these agencies I have visited two to three times.

I haven't had any luck. Each meeting concluded with the bureaucrats referring me to a different agency. Each visit ended up with me having to produce more "required" documents. I always walked away with a new list of people that I was sent to call and see. Now I have two pages of these lists. Alas I'm still stuck in this maze of absurdity that seems to have no exit.

"It's like running an obstacle course," a friend of mine said when I recounted my endless struggle.

The "obstacle course" simile is an understatement. Dealing with the bureaucracy is more like navigating a labyrinth of lunacy. It's a Kafkaesque nightmare from which you want to wake up.

I always wonder if there is ever a way out of what seems to be the universally illogical practices of governments. Think of Kafka's novels, which "evoked the hopelessness of individuals confronting

a relentless, machine-like society in which they are minor cogs."

Rules, regulations, and policies are in place supposedly as a means to the end, but in the sphere of bureaucracy following the rules to the letter has become the end in itself. Bureaucracy is a faceless puppeteer that manipulates those too lazy to think. Rational thinking, discretion, and good judgment have been replaced by these suffocating rules that oftentimes do not work. How many hours do we waste every day or every week trying to navigate these regulations and then recovering from the holdup and jumble that ensue? (By the way, do we need legislators making more inane laws?)

In *The Death of Common Sense*, Philip K. Howard noted how we all waste a great deal of time mired in mundane tasks that create no benefit to anyone.

Incidentally, I took yet another trip to another government agency yesterday and went through the usual filling out of another form and giving an interview. This time my story had gotten longer, considering that it was the seventh agency I had visited. The social worker was really nice. She tried to be helpful. She made several phone calls on my son's behalf. And each call was capped with a recommenda-

SNAP advantageous over NAP

Our Washington Office commissioned an economic impact study on the Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program, SNAP. It says that the current Nutrition Assistance Program, or NAP, shows an average monthly benefit of \$302 per month for a family of four.

"Under SNAP the benefit level per month of four average \$668 nationally and \$985 on neighboring Guam. The implication is that CNMI recipients would get about triple the amount for food assistance over the present NAP system."

While there are issues about the additional cost of operation of some \$650,000 to bring in SNAP, the economic benefits are more than sufficient to make up for what the CNMI spends. Recipients would get some \$19 million in 2013, and \$24 million in 2014 through subsequent years, according to the U.S. Congressional Research Service.

The total economic impact of \$12 million to \$24 million in additional SNAP benefits for CNMI beneficiaries would range from \$21.48 million to \$42.96 million annually using the SNAP multiplier. The domino effect of the multiplier rate simply means more help for recipients and more revenue for the local government.

You could demonize and jab SNAP as a major factor on dependency, but experts who have analyzed the issue beyond a set of figures say it provides critical support for millions of working Americans and serves as a tool for economic recovery. It also increases the food purchasing power of struggling households in order to alleviate hunger and malnutrition.

According to Moody's Investors Service, "food stamps rank

A war anniversary the US wishes to forget

Feb. 4 marks the anniversary of a war America won—but doesn't care to crow about. When the memory only produces shame and regret, you can understand why.

Such is the fate of the Philippine-American War, otherwise known as the Philippine Insurrection, which began on Feb. 4, 1899. It's a reminder of a time when America's dreams of imperial greatness got in the way of its democratic values.

Independent film director John Sayles made a movie about it last year called *Amigo*. On a scant \$1.5 million budget, Sayles showed a humanistic vision of the war as seen through the eyes of Filipinos in one village and how they deal with the occupation by U.S. soldiers. How does one collaborate without betraying the nationalist rebels, many of whom are family?

But *Amigo* faded fast. So, here's a little background:

The war started in a Manila suburb, when American soldiers shot at "the goo-goos," one of the many offensive terms U.S. soldiers used for the Filipinos, and indicative of the racist tone in the war. The nationalists returned fire, and the sequel to the Spanish-American War was under way.

Insurrection doesn't begin to describe the full-fledged war that lasted three years, with more than 100,000 Americans involved. Depending on the accounts you read, the Filipino civilian death toll ranged from 250,000 to as high as 1 million, counting those who died from disease or starvation.

The war was an American betrayal. Nationalists, under Emilio

FLIGHTS

By MAR-VIC CAGURANGAN

Special to the Saipan Tribune



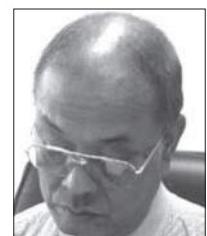
Mar-Vic Cagurangan is a Guam-based journalist. She is the former managing editor of *Glimpses Publications* and is now a full-time domestic goddess. Send feedback to mar_vic_cagurangan@yahoo.com.

tion for her to call another person, and another person, and another person. Obviously, I could empathize with her situation, except that witnessing this bureaucrat getting the bureaucratic runaround felt like watching a satire, in which she is trapped in the quagmire of the very system where she works. It was almost amusing to watch and I couldn't decide whether to laugh or cry.

So I hit another dead end, and left her office with yet another list of required documents to produce and more people to call.

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.

Special to the Saipan Tribune



Delrosario is a regular contributor to the Saipan Tribune's Opinion Section.

number one as an economic stimulus provision. For every \$1 in SNAP, \$1.73 returns to the economy." The USDA's Economic Research Service estimates that "each \$1 billion of retail demand by SNAP generates \$340 million in farm production, \$110 million in farm value added and 3,300 farm jobs." SNAP also "supports low-wage workers in making ends meet and assures that families are financially better off working than on welfare, all the while creating economic stimulus in a time of prolonged economic recession."

It's a plus for employees of both sectors whose work hours have been reduced. It would grant them the opportunity to claim against work hour cuts to make up the family purse, at least on dietary sustenance. It's better by a large margin than the current program. The CNMI is headed into a prolonged recession, if not depression, and you can't deny the multitude their needs to avoid hunger and malnutrition while staying employed or out searching for meaningful employment.

US wishes to forget

By EMIL GUILLERMO

Progressive Media Project



Emil Guillermo is an American-Filipino journalist who writes for the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund. He wrote this for Progressive Media Project, a source of liberal commentary on domestic and international issues; it is affiliated with The Progressive magazine.

Aguinaldo, had broken off from Spain and, relying heavily on a promise of U.S. support during the Spanish-American War, started their own independent republic in 1898—the first in Asia. That promise was broken when the McKinley administration sought the Philippines as a colony and tapped into a new patriotic fervor for American Imperialism.

Some historians believe McKinley instigated the Philippine-American War to gain support in Congress to ratify the Treaty of Paris. That's where the U.S. dealt with Spain directly, cutting out the new Philippine leadership. Instead of becoming the independent country it had hoped for, the Philippines was ceded by Spain to the United States for \$20 million. Aguinaldo went from president to insurrectionist, just like that.

The idea of winning "hearts and minds" and the use of waterboarding had their origins in this war.

We're still dealing with those legacies today.

That an island economy is highly vulnerable to shocks from any and all global economic shifts, i.e., slow recovery and growth, makes it mandatory that the CNMI spends most of the projected income on critically reasoned and productive solutions to grow its economy. The CNMI can't afford another shock with bankruptcy.

Planning is imperative on how the projected income would be spent. Otherwise, the constellation of risks attributable to insatiable and unbridled spending would blossom into an ugly fossilized creature we can ill afford at this juncture. We'd be digging larger holes.

Depleting resources versus mounting obligations have exposed and made brittle existing safeguards or once durable protective system. The demise of the Fund is a perfect example of this mind numbing experience. It's on its way into the land of bankruptcy. The health corporation, left to sink or swim, is following close behind, not to mention CUC.

Deliberative discussion to amend Article 11 should include repeal of Article 12. Both have outlived their usefulness. Our people are sophisticated enough to make full disposition of their land. It's about time that private landowners are given full ownership of their property.

Conditions being what they are leave a perfect setup to rein in modern dystopia or a place full of hardship, devoid of hope. The fireworks of a myriad of increases makes one wonder if this is a microcosm of our future. Well, you be the judge.

Ironic how proponents of Article 12 wish to "protect" loss of privately owned land by denying landowners full disposition of their property. Simultaneously, they wear the oxymoronic hat of total contradiction by bravely recommending sale of public land. This conflicted viewpoint is embarrassingly asymmetrical.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly sunny with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.

▲ 85° ▾ 72°

▲ 85° ▾ 75°

▲ 85° ▾ 76°

▲ 85° ▾ 76°

▲ 86° ▾ 76°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Cloudy	▲ 83 ▾ 76
Palau	Partly Cloudy	▲ 85 ▾ 77
Yap	Cloudy	▲ 86 ▾ 77
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	▲ 88 ▾ 79
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	▲ 85 ▾ 80
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	▲ 85 ▾ 80
Majuro	Showers	▲ 85 ▾ 79

Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲ 72 ▾ 66
Beijing	Sunny	▲ 31 ▾ 7
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	▲ 63 ▾ 57
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	▲ 79 ▾ 69
London	Sunny	▲ 36 ▾ 28
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	▲ 71 ▾ 46
Manila	Thundershowers	▲ 84 ▾ 74
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	▲ 79 ▾ 57
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲ 80 ▾ 67
New York	Showers	▲ 60 ▾ 37
Osaka	Ice	▲ 38 ▾ 31
Paris	Sunny	▲ 27 ▾ 17
Pusan	Windy	▲ 32 ▾ 20
Rome	Showers	▲ 50 ▾ 33
Salem	Showers	▲ 50 ▾ 34
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	▲ 63 ▾ 46
Seoul	Sunny	▲ 21 ▾ 8
Tokyo	Windy	▲ 41 ▾ 30
Washington, DC	Showers	▲ 67 ▾ 46

Tides

Sunrise/Sunset

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	6:46 AM	6:15 PM	Today	11:44 AM
Thursday	6:46 AM	6:15 PM	Wednesday	12:27 PM
Friday	6:46 AM	6:16 PM	Thursday	1:13 PM
Saturday	6:46 AM	6:16 PM	Friday	2:02 PM
Sunday	6:45 AM	6:17 PM	Saturday	3:49 PM

Note: Blank spaces indicate that a rising or a setting did not occur during that 24-hour interval.

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■ ISLAND SNAPSHOT Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.

■ BIRTHDAY GREETINGS A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.

■ BUSINESS Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.

■ SAMUT SARI Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.

■ TRAVELOGUE Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.

CAMPUS BULLETIN

Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when),

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- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 11, 2012

DEPARTURES

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

C05062 2:10am 2:40am 1, 5

SAIPAN (SPN)-ROTA (ROP)

C05064 4:15am 4:50am 1, 5

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

C05064 4:15am 5:45am 1, 5 via ROP

C05070 4:35am 5:25am 2, 3, 4, 6, 7

C05068 8:25am 9:15am Daily

C05074 12:10pm 1:00pm 1, 4, 5, 7

C05076 3:10pm 4:00pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7

C05078 6:50pm 7:40pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7

C05079 7:00pm 7:50pm 3, 6

C05072 9:55pm 10:45pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7

C05072 10:05pm 10:55pm 3, 6

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL287 6:00am 8:40am Daily

DL285 6:35am 9:15am 1, 3, 5, 7

DL297 4:25pm 7:15pm Daily

SAIPAN-Osaka (KIX)

OZ119 4:00am 6:40am Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ606 2:10am 6:00am 1

OZ606 2:40am 6:30am 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

OZ119 4:00am 11:20am Daily via KIX

OZ604 3:20pm 7:10pm Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608 3:35am 7:05am 4, 7

DL581 4:10am 7:30am 1, 5

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646 4:20am 7:30am 2, 6

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648 6:10am 8:40am 1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ606/701 2:10am 11:15am 1 via ICN

OZ606/701 2:40am 11:15am 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN

C05070/191 4:35am 9:45am 3, 6 via GUM

DL287/173 6:00am 10:25pm Daily via NRT

C05068/183 8:25am 9:25pm 2, 5 via GUM

C05068/183 8:25am 9:40pm 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM

C05076/183 3:10pm 9:25pm 2, 5 via GUM

C05076/183 3:10pm 9:40pm 1, 4, 7 via GUM

C05076/193 3:10pm 11:00pm 2, 5 via GUM-Palau

OZ604/703 3:20pm 11:00pm Daily via ICN

C05072/PR111 9:55pm 7:50am+1 1, 5, 7 via GUM

C05072/PR111 10:05pm 7:50am+1 3, 6 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

OZ606/721 2:10am 12:00pm 1 via ICN

OZ606/721 2:40am 12:00pm 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN

C05076/147 3:10pm 10:25pm 1, 5 via GUM

OZ604/723 3:20pm 10:30pm Daily via ICN

OZ604/749 3:20pm 10:50pm Daily via ICN

C0180/5071 11:15pm 7:50am+1 1, 5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ724/603 12:30am 2:20pm Daily via ICN

Business

25 EU nations to sign treaty to stop overspending

BRUSSELS (AP)—All European Union countries except Britain and the Czech Republic agreed Monday to sign a new treaty designed to stop overspending in the eurozone and put an end to the bloc's crippling debt crisis, while EU leaders also pledged to stimulate growth and employment.

The new treaty, known as the fiscal compact, was agreed at a summit of European leaders in Brussels on Monday. It includes strict debt brakes and makes it more difficult for deficit sinners to escape sanctions. The 17 countries in the eurozone hope the tighter rules will restore confidence in their joint currency and convince investors that all of them will get their debts under control.

"We have a majority of 25 that will now sign up to the fiscal compact," Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt said Monday night after the summit



Czech Republic's Prime Minister Petr Necas addresses the media during an EU summit at the European Council building in Brussels, Monday, Jan. 30, 2012.

of European heads of government in Brussels.

Although the new rules only apply to the 17 euro states, the currency union wants to get broad support from the other EU states, in hopes the accord will eventually be integrated into the main EU treaty.

Britain had said in December it wouldn't sign the new treaty. Reinfeldt said the Czech Republic didn't sign because of parliamentary procedural problems.

"I don't want to stand in the way of what they think they should do," British Prime Minister David Cameron said of the other countries. "But this is not an EU treaty because I vetoed that."

Leaders at the summit also promised to stimulate growth and create jobs across the region, an acknowledgment that their exclusive focus on austerity has had painful side effects.

"Yes we need discipline, but we also need growth," said Jose Manuel Barroso, the president of

the European Commission, the EU's executive arm.

The leaders pledged to offer more training for young people to ease their transition into the work force, to deploy unused development funds to create jobs, to reduce barriers to doing business across the EU's 27 countries and ensure that small businesses have access to credit.

However there was no offer of any new financial stimulus.

"We must do more to get Europe out of the crisis," the leaders said in a statement.

Barroso said that there is still euro82 billion (\$107.5 billion) in development funds that have yet to be allocated that small and medium businesses can use for various purposes, including as guarantees to get funding from banks.

He also said the Commission will dispatch action teams to the eight countries where youth unemployment is the highest and help fund apprenticeships and young startups.

Investors face more than 70 pct. loss in Greek deal

BRUSSELS (AP)—Investors participating in a deal to slash Greece's massive debt would face an overall loss on their bond holdings of more than 70 percent, a person involved in the negotiations said early Tuesday.

European leaders at a summit in Brussels said a final debt deal could be signed off in the coming days, together with a second multibillion-euro bailout package designed to save the country from a potentially disastrous bankruptcy.

Athens and representatives of investors holding Greek government bonds over the

weekend came close to a final agreement designed to bring Greece's debt down to a more manageable level. Without a restructuring, those debts would swell to around double the country's economic output by the end of the year.

If the agreement works as planned, it will help Greece remain solvent and help Europe avoid a blow to its already weakened financial system, even though banks and other bond investors will have to accept big losses.

The person involved in the talks said Monday that the more-than 70 percent loss was

the result of cutting the bonds' face value in half, reducing the average interest rate to between 3.5 per cent and 4 percent and pushing repayment of the bonds 30 years into the future. A second person briefed on the talks confirmed that the loss on the so-called net present value of the bonds would be around 70 percent.

Both people spoke on condition of anonymity because the talks are confidential.

The deal, which would reduce the country's debt by about euro100 billion (\$131.1 billion) and save it billions of euros in interest payments,

needs to be completed quickly. Greece runs the risk of a disorderly default on March 20, when it faces a euro14.5 billion bond repayment it cannot afford without additional help.

Many investors—banks, insurance companies and hedge funds—who hold Greek bonds also hold debt from other countries that use the euro, which could lose value if there is a fully fledged Greek default. This is the scenario the eurozone fears most and why the currency union hopes investors will voluntarily accept a partial loss on their Greek bonds.

Obama wants small business tax, investment breaks

WASHINGTON (AP)—Fleshing out a year-old initiative, the Obama administration wants Congress to enact or expand tax breaks for small businesses and remove barriers to startups, seizing on some existing bipartisan proposals that could win support even in the polarized climate of an election year.

White House officials say President Barack Obama will call on Congress Tuesday to pass legislation that, among other measures, would eliminate tax rates on capital gains for investments in small businesses and extend for a year the ability of all businesses to immediately deduct all of the costs of equip-

ment and software purchases.

The legislative package, which will be part of Obama's 2013 budget proposal later this month, also would include a new 10 percent tax credit for small business that add jobs or increase wages in 2012. In addition, the legislation would make it easier for new startup companies to raise money and to go public. It also would expand a government small business investment program from \$3 billion to \$4 billion.

"The president has made small businesses and particularly start-ups a key aspect of his economic growth agenda because he understands how

much the newest and fastest-growing small businesses drive job growth in our economy," said Gene Sperling, director of the White House National Economic Council.

The proposals borrow from past Obama initiatives and from bipartisan legislation that has either already passed in the House or is being proposed in the Senate. Obama's package includes proposals offered in the Senate by Democrat Chris Coons of Delaware and Republican Marco Rubio of Florida and another plan by Republican Jerry Moran of Kansas and Democrat Mark Warner of Virginia.

White House officials would

not disclose the total cost of the president's package, but Sperling said it would be more than covered by proposals to reduce tax expenditures and by closed loopholes that the administration will call for in its 2013 budget.

With the presidential election set to become the main political preoccupation of 2012, the White House initiative is designed to take advantage of cooperative attempts by Republicans and Democrats to find modest remedies to spur the economy. Most of those efforts have been overshadowed by congressional bickering and by the Republican presidential primary and Obama's growing attention to his re-election.

Delta's net income for 2011 was \$1.2 billion, excluding special items, as the company offset \$3 billion higher fuel expense through strong revenue performance and its fuel hedging program.

Delta's net income for the December 2011 quarter was \$379 million, or \$0.45 per diluted share, excluding special items. This is a \$221 million improvement year over year.

Delta's GAAP net income was \$425 million, or \$0.50 per diluted share, for the December 2011 quarter and \$854 million for 2011.

2011 results include \$264 million in profit sharing expense, including \$89 million in the December quarter, recognizing Delta employees' contributions toward meeting the company's operating and financial goals.

Delta's adjusted net debt at the end of 2011 was \$12.9 billion, a \$4.1 billion reduction from 2009.

"Delta people pulled together in 2011 to produce a solid profit, strong cash generation, and the best operational performance in the industry for our custom-

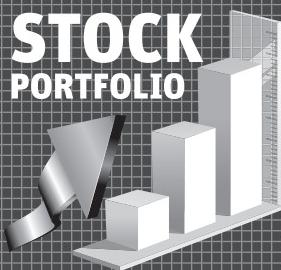
ers. I want to thank them for their hard work through a challenging year and congratulate them on earning \$264 million in profit sharing and \$60 million in Shared Rewards for their exceptional performance," said Richard Anderson, Delta's chief executive officer. "Looking forward to 2012, we will continue our commitment to sustained profitability and superior returns by growing and diversifying our revenues, while taking a disciplined approach to capacity, costs and capital spending."

Delta's operating revenue grew \$610 million, or 8 percent, in the December 2011 quarter compared to the December 2010 quarter. Load factor increased to 81.7 percent, with traffic down 3 percent on a 3.5 percent decrease in capacity.

Passenger revenue increased 8 percent, or \$555 million, compared to the prior year period. Passenger unit revenue (PRASM) increased 12 percent, driven by an 11 percent improvement in yield.

Cargo revenue increased 8 percent, or \$20 million, on higher cargo yields.

Other revenue increased 4 percent, or \$35 million, from higher third-party maintenance revenue. (*Delta Air Lines*)



LEADING INDICATORS

DOW

12,653.70
-6.74
-0.05%

S&P

1,313.01
-3.32
-0.25%

NASDAQ

2,811.94
-4.61
-0.16%

EXCHANGE RATES

Australian Dollar	0.9408
British Pound	0.6356
Canadian Dollar	1.0006
Chinese Yuan	6.3056
Euro	0.7582

Hong Kong Dollar 7.7562

Indian Rupee 49.6688

Indonesian Rupiah 8,994.00

Japanese Yen 76.2200

Malaysian Ringgit 3.0445

New Zealand Dollar 1.2150

Philippine Peso 43.0000

Singapore Dollar 1.2539

South Korean Won 1,124.05

Swiss Franc 0.9142

Taiwan Dollar 29.5640

Thailand Baht 31.1500

Nation

No letup on Gingrich by Romney before Florida vote

MIAMI (AP)—Cheered by new polls, Mitt Romney is all but predicting victory in Tuesday's Republican presidential primary. Newt Gingrich is looking past Florida to regroup, vowing he won't stay buried long.

"With a turnout like this, I'm beginning to feel we might win tomorrow," an upbeat Romney told a crowd of several hundred at a stop in Dunedin on Monday as he and Gingrich zipped across the state making their final appeals.

Gingrich, in turn, acknowledged that his momentum had been checked but promised not to back down. He characterized Romney as an imposter, and his team started to plot a strategy for upcoming contests.

"He can bury me for a very short amount of time with four or five or six times as much money," Gingrich said in a television interview. "In the long run, the Republican Party is not going to nominate ... a liberal Republican."

GOP officials in Florida were anticipating a big turnout, more than 2 million voters, up from a record 1.9 million in the Republican primary in 2008. More than 605,000 Floridians had already voted as of Monday, either by visiting early voting stations or by mailing in absentee ballots, ahead of the total combined early vote in the GOP primary four years ago.

In the span of a volatile week, the tables have turned in this potentially pivotal primary state.

Emboldened GOP wants to abolish state income taxes

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—A year after Republicans swept into office across the country, many have trained their sights on what has long been a fiscal conservative's dream: the steep reduction or even outright elimination of state income taxes.

The idea has circulated among academics and think-tank researchers for years. But it's moving quietly into mainstream political discourse, despite the fact that such sweeping changes would almost certainly mean a total rewiring of tax systems at a time when most states are still struggling in the aftermath of the recession.

"I think there's going to be more action that way," espe-



AP
Republican presidential candidate, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney makes a campaign stop at Ring Power Lift Trucks on Monday, Jan. 30, 2012 in Jacksonville, Fla.

Gingrich rode a triumphant wave into Florida after a South Carolina victory nine days ago. But since then, Romney and his allies have pummeled the former House speaker on TV and on the campaign trail. Romney turned in two strong debate performances, while Gingrich faltered. Now opinion polls show the former Massachusetts governor with a comfortable lead here.

Romney and Gingrich have been the only two candidates to compete in Florida in earnest. Neither former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum nor Texas Rep. Ron. Paul campaigned

much in the state, and they were elsewhere on Monday.

Clearly in command, Romney flew to stops in media markets in northern Florida and the populous swing regions of central Florida, determined to keep Gingrich from surging late.

Romney renewed attacks on his rival as an untrustworthy, Washington influence peddler at the outset of two separate appearances Monday. He claimed that Gingrich's ties to federally backed mortgage giant Freddie Mac have hurt the former speaker in a state wracked by the foreclosure crisis.

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"He made \$1.6 million in his company, the very institution that helped stand behind the huge housing crisis here in Florida," Romney said in Dunedin. Gingrich's consulting firm received more than \$1.5 million from the federally backed mortgage giant over a period after he left Congress in 1999.

Gingrich plowed ahead, flying to stops in northern Florida starting in Jacksonville—near his home state of Georgia—before touching down in conservative Pensacola and then Tampa.

Along the way, he tried to rally conservatives by casting

income taxes

Gov. Mary Fallin says gradually cutting the top income-tax rate of 5.25 percent will make the state more attractive to businesses, help spur economic growth and ensure Oklahoma is competitive against neighboring states such as Texas. Although the personal income tax does not apply to corporate earnings, supporters say company executives and employees will prefer to live in a state that doesn't tax personal income.

South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley is pushing this year to consolidate four personal income tax brackets and to phase out corporate income taxes. She promises to seek more tax cuts in the future.

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Tens of thousands of Burmese pythons, which are native to Southeast Asia, are believed to be living in the Everglades, where they thrive in the warm, humid climate.

Romney as an imposter and himself as the true GOP stalwart. His claim to conservative principles wasn't limited to economic issues.

"No politician, no judge, no bureaucrat can come between you and God," Gingrich told an audience in Tampa. "I'm a little bit tired of being lectured about respecting every other religion on the planet."

Gingrich, who has sought to wrap himself in the mantle of Ronald Reagan, campaigned with the late president's son Michael. He was also joined by former GOP presidential candidate Herman Cain, who endorsed him Sunday.

A win by Romney would again reset the 2012 GOP race,

seen early this month as his to lose, then thrown into doubt by Gingrich's come-from-behind win in South Carolina.

Romney easily won the New Hampshire primary after nearly winning the in leadoff Iowa. The South Carolina setback behind him, Romney sought to aggressively stop Gingrich, aided by a well-funded political action committee that supports him and is run by former political aides.

Together, Romney's campaign and the supportive group Restore Our Future have combined to spend \$6.8 million on television ads in the final week of the Florida campaign, about three times what Gingrich and a group supporting him have spent.

Pythons apparently wiping out Everglades mammals

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla.

(AP)—A burgeoning population of huge pythons—many of them pets that were turned loose by their owners when they got too big—appears to be wiping out large numbers of raccoons, opossums, bobcats and other mammals in the Everglades, a study says.

The study, published Monday in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, found that sightings of medium-size mammals are down dramatically—as much as 99 percent, in some cases—in areas where pythons and other large, non-native constrictor snakes are known to be lurking.

Scientists fear the pythons could disrupt the food chain and upset the Everglades' environmental balance in ways difficult to predict.

"The effects of declining mammal populations on the overall Everglades ecosystem, which extends well beyond the national park boundaries, are likely profound," said John Willson, a research scientist at Virginia Tech University and co-author of the study.

Tens of thousands of Burmese pythons, which are native to Southeast Asia, are believed to be living in the Everglades, where they thrive in the warm, humid climate.

While many were apparently released by their owners, others may have escaped from pet shops during Hurricane Andrew in 1992 and have been reproducing ever since.

Burmese pythons can grow to be 26 feet long and more than 200 pounds, and they have been known to swallow animals as large as alligators. They and other constrictor snakes kill their prey by coiling around it and suffocating it.

The National Park Service has counted 1,825 Burmese pythons that have been caught in and around Everglades National Park since 2000. Among the largest so far was a 156-pound, 16.4-foot one captured earlier this month.

For the study, researchers drove 39,000 miles along Everglades-area roads from 2003 through 2011, counting wildlife spotted along the way and comparing the results with surveys conducted on the same routes in 1996 and 1997.

The researchers found staggering declines in animal sightings: a drop of 99.3 percent among raccoons, 98.9 percent for opossums, 94.1 percent for white-tailed deer and 87.5 percent for bobcats. Along roads where python populations are believed to be smaller, declines were lower but still notable.

visibility quickly became murky again, officials said Monday. "We went through the area. We made an assessment. We came to the conclusion that the road was safe to travel and that is when we opened the road up," Highway patrol spokesman Lt. Patrick Riordan said in a news conference. "Drivers have to recognize that the environment changes. They have to be prepared to make good judgments."

ACROSS THE NATION

Ill. nuclear reactor loses power, venting steam

CHICAGO (AP)—A nuclear reactor at a northern Illinois plant shut down Monday after losing power, and steam was being vented to reduce pressure, according to officials from Exelon Nuclear and federal regulators. Unit 2 at Byron Generating Station, about 95 miles northwest of Chicago, shut down at 10:18

a.m., after losing power, Exelon officials said. Diesel generators began supplying power to the plant, and operators began releasing steam to cool the reactor from the part of the plant where turbines are producing electricity, not from within the nuclear reactor itself, officials said. The steam contains low levels of tritium, a radioactive form of hydrogen, but federal and plant officials insisted the levels were safe for

workers and the public.

Marine pleads guilty to assault fellow Marine

KANEOHE BAY, Hawaii (AP)—A Hawaii-based Marine accused of hazing a fellow Marine who later committed suicide in Afghanistan was sentenced Monday to 30 days in jail and a reduction in rank. Navy Capt. Carrie Stephens, the judge in Lance Cpl. Jacob Jacoby's

special court-martial, handed down the sentence after Jacoby pleaded guilty to assault. Jacoby's rank will be reduced by one grade to private first class. Two other Marines have also been accused of hazing Lew and face courts-martial. Jacoby admitted he punched and kicked Lance Cpl. Harry Lew. As part of the plea deal, prosecutors withdrew charges that Jacoby humiliated and threatened Lew.

Fla. highway patrol defends reopening I-75

GAINESVILLE, Fla. (AP)—Minutes before two pileups killed 10 people on a highway shrouded in fog and thick smoke from a brush fire, the Florida Highway Patrol had reopened the always busy six-lane interstate after an earlier serious accident. A sergeant and lieutenant determined after about three hours that conditions had cleared enough for drivers, but

Asia

China raises security to contain Tibet protests

BEIJING (AP)—A senior official in Chinese-ruled Tibet is ordering heightened security in Buddhist monasteries and along key roadways as the government tries to prevent protests that erupted in neighboring Tibetan communities from spreading.

Inspecting security around the Tibetan capital of Lhasa this week, the city's Communist Party secretary, Qi Zhala, warned officials and clerics at monasteries that they would be dismissed if any trouble arose and told police at a highway checkpoint to be alert for acts of sabotage.

Officials "must profoundly recognize the important significance of preserving stability in temples and monasteries," the state-run Tibet Daily on Tuesday quoted Qi as saying Monday. "Strive to realize the goal of 'no big incidents, no medium incidents and not even a small incident.'"

The exhortations underscore China's nervousness as it tries to squelch the most serious outbreak of anti-government protests among Tibetans in nearly four years.

Tibetan areas in the neighbor-

ing province of Sichuan—on tenterhooks for more than a year as more than a dozen monks, nuns and lay people separately set themselves on fire to protest Chinese rule—saw large demonstrations last week. Police fired on crowds in three separate areas, leaving several Tibetans dead and injuring dozens, according to Tibet support groups outside China.

The violence has highlighted anew the government's failure to win over Tibetans and other ethnic minorities through policies to boost economic growth and incomes while increasing police presence and controlling religious practices to deter displays of separatism. State media announced Monday that 8,000 additional police were being recruited in Xinjiang, a traditionally Muslim region north of Tibet that has its own separatist rebellion.

Before the latest protests, Chinese security forces were already hunkering down for an annual period of tensions in Tibetan areas: the weeks between the Tibetan new year, which this year falls in late February, and a

string of anniversaries in March marking previous anti-Chinese uprisings.

A crucial task for the government is to keep the protests in Sichuan from spilling into Tibet proper, especially Lhasa, home to major monasteries that have been at the forefront of previous unrest. In 2008, rioting in Lhasa left at least 22 people dead.

Among the stops Qi, the Lhasa official, made on his inspection tour was a key roadway leading from Sichuan into the capital and two major monasteries on the city's outskirts.

Qi spoke with members of the monasteries' management committees. The committees are comprised of officials and clerics that Beijing has set up in Tibetan religious institutes to purge them of followers of the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan leader in exile in India. The groups and their controls have contributed to the tensions behind the protests.

"They who do not do their jobs responsibly, if any problems happen, will be fired immediately without exception and will be strictly held accountable," Qi was quoted as saying.



In this March 10, 2009 file photo, Tibetan monks walk past Chinese paramilitary police who patrol a street of Kangding, Ganzi prefecture of southwestern China's Sichuan province.

Afghan woman killed, apparently for bearing girl

by the end of 2014.

In the 10 years since the ouster of the Taliban, great strides have been made for women in Afghanistan, with many attending school, working in offices and even sometimes marching in protests. But abuse and repression of women are still common, particularly in rural areas where women are still unlikely to set foot outside of the house without a burqa robe that covers them from head to toe.

The man in the latest case, Sher Mohammad, fled the Khanabad district in Kunduz province last week, about the time a neighbor found his 22-year-old wife dead in their house, said District Police Chief Sufi Habibullah. Medical examiners whom police brought to check the body

said she had been strangled, Habibullah said.

The woman, named Estorai, had warned family members that her husband had repeatedly reproached her for giving birth to a daughter rather than a son and had threatened to kill her if it happened again, said Provincial women's affairs chief Nadira Ghya, who traveled to Khanabad to deal with the case. Estorai gave birth to her second daughter between two and three months ago, Ghya said. Officials did not have a family name for either Sher Mohammad or Estorai.

Police took the man's mother into custody because she appears to have collaborated in a plot to kill her daughter-in-law, Habibullah said.

NKorea's young leader gets rock star treatment

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea's young new leader gets rock star treatment when he visits his troops—just as his father did. But while the late Kim Jong Il mostly stayed aloof in dark shades, his son holds hands and hugs his soldiers.

Kim Jong Un seems to want to bond with his country's people.

The style harkens back to Kim Il Sung, his grandfather and revered founder of the country and ruling dynasty, and may reflect an attempt to turn a corner on the periods of hardship and famine under Kim Jong Il, analysts say. Kim Il Sung's image as a daring young general fighting Japanese colonial troops is powerfully engraved in the minds of North Koreans.

Cheers, applause and calls of "Hurrah!" greet Kim Jong Un as he examines the heating systems of soldiers' quarters, the pressure of their water faucets, the books stacked in their libraries—even the taste of their food.

The North Korean state media reports and video footage of such "guidance visits" provide rare windows into the personalities of North Korea's leaders for outsiders and for the country's people alike. Few North Ko-

reans, for instance, even knew what the elder Kim's voice sounded like, analysts say, despite his ruling for 17 years until his death Dec. 17.

In visits made so far by Kim Jong Un, believed to be in his late 20s, North Korea specialists have detected more warmth in his approach than the dour tours made in recent years by Kim Jong Il.

The younger Kim may be trying to emulate Kim Il Sung and move away from his father, who ruled during a famine in the mid-to-late-1990s that killed hundreds of thousands, said Koh Yu-hwan, a North Korea professor at Seoul's Dongguk University. North Korea also has faced international condemnation and sanctions for its pursuit of nuclear weapons.

"He'll try to look comfortable among the masses. He'll try to form an intimacy with the people, perhaps more than his father did," Koh said.

Imitating Kim Il Sung is a "positive for Kim Jong Un, because memories of his father Kim Jong Il aren't very good among ordinary people," Koh said. "People fondly remember the days of Kim Il Sung."

Kim Il Sung often was pictured surrounded by children,

and Kim Jong Un resurrected that image during a recent visit to the Mangyongdae Revolutionary School.

As children in military uniforms cheered and clapped, a documentary on state TV showed Kim embracing one child's face with his hands. During lunch, Kim patted students in encouragement and watched with a grin as two women ladled out soup for students; he poured a drop of sauce on his thumb so he could taste it.

His main emphasis, however, has been on military posts—with seven such reported visits since the New Year. They seek to show citizens that their new leader is firmly in command of the country's most important institution, its 1.2 million-strong military, and that he is loved and respected by young troops and elderly generals alike.

While Kim Jong Il had two decades to prepare for leadership, Kim Jong Un was only publicly unveiled as heir in 2010, and outside observers have raised doubts about Kim Jong Un's ability to lead a country locked in a nuclear standoff with its neighbors and Washington and with a history of attacking South Korea.

ASIA BRIEFS

Japan Cabinet approves bill to cap reactor life

TOKYO (AP)—Japan's Cabinet has approved a bill designed to put a 40-year cap on the operational life of nuclear reactors as one of several steps to improve safety after last year's Fukushima disaster. The legislation introduced Tuesday still needs parliamentary approval to take effect. Japan currently has no legal limit on the operational lifespan of reactors. The bill allows an extension of up to 20 years in some cases—an exception that critics have blasted as a loophole. Officials have said extensions will be rare and require strict safety standards.

PH blast kills rebel, wounds 11 civilians

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippine military says an accidental grenade blast killed a communist rebel and wounded 11 civilians, including seven children. Col. Leopoldo Galon said reb-

els were conducting lectures in a village in southern Bukidnon province's Kibawe township when a guerrilla accidentally dropped a grenade. It was not immediately clear if the rebel who died was the one who dropped the grenade. The seven children hurt in Monday's blast are aged 9 to 16. The rebels have been fighting for a Marxist state since 1969 and are listed by Washington as terrorists.

Another Chinese dissident on trial for subversion

BEIJING (AP)—A Hong Kong-based human rights group says another Chinese dissident has been tried for inciting subversion. The Information Center for Human Rights and Democracy said in a faxed statement that writer Zhu Yufu's trial happened Tuesday morning in the eastern city of Hangzhou, with no verdict immediately announced. The statement cited Zhu's wife, Jiang Hangli, who attended the nearly three-hour trial with Zhu's two lawyers.

World

Syrian troops push back in fight on Damascus edges

BEIRUT (AP)—Syrian forces pushed dissident troops back from the edge of Damascus in heavy fighting Monday, escalating efforts to take back control of the capital's eastern doorstep ahead of key U.N. talks over a draft resolution demanding that President Bashar Assad step aside.

Gunfire and the boom of shelling rang out in several suburbs on Damascus' outskirts that have come under the domination of anti-regime fighters. Gunmen—apparently army defectors—were shown firing back in amateur videos posted online by activists. In one video, a government tank on the snow-dusted mountain plateau towering over the capital fired at one of the suburbs below.

As the bloodshed increased, with activists reporting more than 40 civilians killed Monday, Western and Arab countries stepped up pressure on Assad's ally Russia to overcome its opposition to the resolution.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and the British and French foreign ministers were heading to New York to push for backing of the measure during talks Tuesday at the United Nations.

"The status quo is unsustainable," Clinton said, saying the Assad regime was preventing a peaceful transition and warning that the resulting instability could "spill over throughout the region."



A Syrian forces tank moving along a road during clashes with the Syrian army defectors, in the Rastan area in Homs province, central Syria, on Monday Jan. 30, 2012.

The draft resolution demands that Assad halt the crackdown and implement an Arab peace plan that calls for him to hand over power to his vice president and allow creation of a unity government to pave the way for elections.

If Assad fails to comply within 15 days, the council would consider "further measures," a reference to a possible move to impose economic or other sanctions.

British Prime Minister David Cameron called the situation in Syria "appalling" and appealed Monday to Russia to back the U.N. Security Council resolution.

"It is time for all the members of U.N. Security Council to live up to their responsibilities instead of shielding those who have blood on their hands," Cameron said.

Moscow, which in October vetoed the first council attempt to condemn Syria's crackdown, has shown little sign of budging in its opposition. It warns that the new measure could open the door to eventual military intervention, the way an Arab-backed U.N. resolution led to NATO airstrikes in Libya.

A French official said the draft U.N. resolution has a "comfort-

able majority" of support from 10 of the Security Council's 15 members, meaning Russia or China would have to use its veto power to stop it. The official said Russia had agreed to negotiate on the draft, but it was not yet clear if it would be willing to back it if changes were made.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity in accordance with department rules.

The Kremlin said Monday it was trying to put together negotiations in Moscow between Damascus and the opposition. It said Assad's government has agreed to participate; the opposition has

in the past rejected any negotiations unless violence stops.

Western countries cited the past week's escalation in fighting to pressure Moscow.

"Russia can no longer explain blocking the U.N. and providing cover for the regime's brutal repression," a spokeswoman for British Prime Minister David Cameron said, on customary condition of anonymity in line with policy.

The United Nations estimated several weeks ago that more than 5,400 people have been killed in Syria's crackdown on the uprising against Assad's rule, which began in March. It has been unable to update the figure, and more than 200 people have been killed in the past five days alone, according to activists' reports.

Pro-Assad forces have fought for three days to take back a string of suburbs on the eastern approach to Damascus, mostly poorer, Sunni-majority communities. In past weeks, army defectors—masked men in military attire wielding assault rifles—set up checkpoints in the communities, defending protesters and virtually seizing control.

Late Sunday, government troops retook two of the districts closest to Damascus, Ein Tarma and Kfar Batna, said Rami Abdul-Rahman, the London-based head of the Syrian Human Rights Observatory, which tracks violence through contacts on the ground.

Rights groups blast Haiti judge on Duvalier case

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)—Human rights groups harshly criticized a Haitian judge Monday after he recommended former dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier face trial only on corruption charges—and not for rights abuses during his brutal 15-year rule.

The organizations, both Haitian and foreign, said Investigative Magistrate Carves Jean ignored critical testimony that would've given weight to a prosecution of the once-feared ruler known as "Baby Doc" for crimes that include torture, false imprisonment and murder.

"The Haitian people deserve their day in court to prove Duvalier's culpability, which is an essential part of any meaningful reconciliation process," said William O'Neill, director of the Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum.

Mario Joseph, a lawyer whose Haitian-run firm is representing some of the Duvalier regime's victims, said the judge "made so many errors" that they compromised his pre-trial investigation. He said the judge disregarded testimony from eight people who wanted to file complaints alleging torture and false imprisonment.

Jean decided that Duvalier should go before a special court that handles relatively minor crimes. Duvalier, the former "president for life" who has been free to roam about the capital since his surprise return from exile last year, would face no more than five years in prison if convicted in that court.

Jean said the statute of limitations has run out on any human rights crimes committed during Duvalier's 1971-86 regime but not on accusations of misappropriation of public funds. He did not explain his reasoning, although Duvalier is widely thought to have used money from the Haitian treasury to finance his life in exile.

The judge declined to give reporters a copy of the 20-page order that he held in his hands in his office at the courthouse. The decision, based on a yearlong investigation, must first be reviewed by the attorney general as well as by Duvalier and the victims of his regime who filed complaints against the former leader, Jean said.

Duvalier's lawyer, Reynold Georges, had argued that all charges should be dismissed, and he said he would appeal Jean's finding as soon as he received the paperwork.

WORLD BRIEFS

Mexican official flies with \$1.9M in luggage

VERACRUZ, Mexico (AP)—A Mexican state official was detained as he got off a government-owned plane with \$1.9 million crammed into a briefcase and a backpack, prosecutors announced Monday, touching off allegations of campaign finance violations tied to the upcoming presidential election. Tomas Ruiz, treasury secretary for Veracruz state, said there was nothing illicit about the money the official was carrying. He said the cash, from state coffers, was destined for a Mexico City advertising firm that agreed to promote festivals to attract tourists to the eastern coastal state, including a well-known carnival in the port city of Veracruz.

group said. The violence is uncharacteristic for Senegal, a normally peaceful nation on Africa's western coast, and suggests its political conflict is escalating. Protests spread from the capital to the interior last Friday after the constitutional court validated President Abdoulaye Wade's candidacy in next month's election.

DomRep bus crash kills driver, injures 10 tourists

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic (AP)—Officials in the Dominican Republic say a tourist bus has crashed down a hill, killing the driver and injuring 10 people, including seven from the United States. Local civil defense official Jacqueline Polonia says the bus was carrying 50 passengers when it went off the road and turned over Monday near the mountain town of Jarabacoa in the central part of the Caribbean country. Polonia says the injured have been treated at hospitals in the city of La Vega, but none of the injuries was serious. She describes the seven injured Americans as all being 20 or 21.

2 shot dead in Senegal election protest

DAKAR, Senegal (AP)—Paramilitary police in northern Senegal opened fire Monday on men and women protesting the president's plan to run for a third term, killing a woman in her 60s and a high school student, a witness and a rights

Israel sees narrowing window for attack on Iran

JERUSALEM (AP)—Officials are quietly conceding that new international sanctions targeting Iran's suspect nuclear program, while welcome, are further constraining Israel's ability to take military action—just as a window of opportunity is closing because Tehran is moving more of its installations underground.

The officials say that Israel must act by the summer if it wants to effectively attack Iran's program.

A key question in the debate is how much damage Israel, or anyone else, can inflict, and whether it would be worth the risk of a possible counterstrike.

Israel has been a leading voice in the international calls to curb Iran's nuclear program. Like the West, it believes the Iranians are deliberately drifting into what we call an immunity zone where practically no surgical operation could block them."

Returning Monday to Israel, Barak added: "We must not waste time on this matter; the Iranians continue to advance (toward nuclear weapons), identifying every crack and squeezing through. Time is urgently running out."

Key Israeli defense officials believe that the time to strike, if such a decision is made, would have to be by the middle of this year.

Complicating the task is the assessment that Iran is stepping up efforts to move its work on

diplomatic solution. But—skeptical of international resolve—Iran refuses to rule out the use of force, saying frequently that "all options are on the table."

In comments Friday to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak called for even tougher sanctions against Iran and said time was running out for the world to act.

"We are determined to prevent Iran from turning nuclear," he said. "It seems to us to be urgent, because the Iranians are deliberately drifting into what we call an immunity zone where practically no surgical operation could block them."

Returning Monday to Israel, Barak added: "We must not waste time on this matter; the Iranians continue to advance (toward nuclear weapons), identifying every crack and squeezing through. Time is urgently running out."

Several officials at the heart of the decision-making structure, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were discussing some of Israel's deepest secrets, said they feel compelled to give the sanctions time.

In this way, somewhat paradoxically, the new economic sanctions the U.S. and Europe are imposing—while meeting a repeated Israeli request—have emerged as an obstacle to military action.

Focus

Millions of Americans board flights on foreign airlines every year with little or no idea of how safe they'll be, and the U.S. government provides no help telling them which ones may be risky to fly.

In contrast, the European Union gives passengers a safety yardstick by listing foreign airlines—more than 270 of them from 20 nations—it has banned from flying into airports within the EU because it considers the airlines too unsafe.

The U.S. government's aviation safety regulator, the Federal Aviation Administration, lists nations' civil aviation authorities that do not meet minimum international standards for safe flying and do not provide proper oversight of airlines based within their borders.

Some consumer and aviation safety advocates say the U.S. government is not doing enough to protect and inform Americans who board foreign-based airliners without knowing of the increased risks.

"I don't believe the average traveler traveling internationally has any idea about the safety, or lack thereof, of foreign air carriers," says passenger-rights advocate Kate Hanni, executive director of the U.S. group FlyersRights.org. "Good, reliable data about foreign airlines and their countries' safety oversight is not publicly provided. If fliers knew the truth, they would likely not fly on many carriers."

More than 20 percent of foreign civil aviation authorities evaluated by the FAA—or 22 of 103 countries assessed—don't meet minimum international safety standards and don't sufficiently oversee the airlines in their countries, the FAA says.

The agency says its approach to alerting Americans about the safety of aviation overseas is best because it allows the U.S. government to deal with foreign governments, rather than individual airlines, to try to improve safety.

It says foreign governments' civil aviation authorities are legally responsible for ensuring aviation safety and encouraging airlines' compliance with national aviation laws.

The agency assesses foreign civil aviation authorities' ability to meet international safety standards through its International Aviation Safety Assessment Program.

Consumer safety advocates say the program fails to provide useful safety information to travelers. The program is "very incomplete, potentially deceptive and only a starting point for travelers concerned about safety," says consumer advocate Paul Hudson, a member of the FAA's rule-making advisory committee.

It's easy for U.S. air travelers to be lulled into thinking air travel is safe just about anywhere they want to go.

Fatal airline accidents are rare in the U.S. There's been one since the beginning of 2007—the crash of a Colgan Air plane near Buffalo, N.Y., in February 2009 that killed 50 people.

But accidents occur more frequently abroad. There were six fatal accidents of airline passenger planes from Jan. 1 through June 12 this year, according to the Aviation Safety Network, a website that compiles accident data. In May, all 25 people aboard a Merpati Nusantara Airlines flight were killed when a Chinese-built Xian MA-60 turboprop plane crashed into the sea short of a

How safe is that foreign airline?

By GARY STOLLER
USA TODAY



MCT

Virgin America is winning accolades for top-notch service.

runway at Indonesia's Kaimana-Utarom Airport.

A look at incidents through the end of July shows no airliner deaths, but Air Canada and Egypt Air flights each with more than 250 aboard evacuated after onboard fires. In the case of the Air Canada flight from Sydney, Australia, to Vancouver on July 28, there was no actual fire discovered but the plane returned to Sydney after 30 minutes in the air as a precaution after smoke came out of a galley oven.

On July 30, a Caribbean Airlines plane that skidded off a runway in Guyana on landing avoided fatalities among 162 aboard, even though the plane broke in half.

Merpati Nusantara Airlines, based in Indonesia, is banned by the European Union from flying into EU nations, for safety reasons. The FAA's assessment program says Indonesia's civil aviation authority does not meet minimum international safety standards.

Frequent business traveler John Green of Sandy, Utah, says the FAA and the Transportation Department should provide Americans who are traveling abroad with specific safety information about airlines, as the EU does.

"The European Union does a much better job of keeping an eye on foreign airlines," says Green, the president of a company that sells equipment to make composite materials.

The Transportation Department, which includes the FAA, has an aviation consumer protection division, but safety matters are the responsibility of the FAA, department spokesman Bill

Mosley says.

FAA spokeswoman Sasha Johnson says the agency publicizes its assessments of foreign countries' aviation authorities on its website and in press releases "so that all travelers can make informed decisions about traveling overseas."

The program, which began in 1993, has "improved safety for the flying public" by helping other countries meet international safety standards, she says.

Most of the 22 aviation authorities not meeting the standards are in Third World countries.

Israel, a nation visited by many Americans, and Barbados, a popular vacation destination, are among those nations the FAA lists as having insufficient oversight of aviation safety.

Although the FAA says Israel's aviation authority doesn't meet the standards, the agency allows the Israeli airline El Al, which has been flying into the U.S. for decades, to continue flying to U.S. destinations. An El Al cargo plane had a fatal accident in 1992, but the airline has had no passenger fatalities since 1950, the Aviation Safety Network database says.

Any foreign airline flying into the U.S. can continue to do so "under heightened FAA surveillance" after the agency determines the aviation authority in the airline's home nation doesn't meet international standards, the FAA says.

No airlines from Barbados fly into the U.S. John Beale, Barbados' ambassador to the U.S., says he thinks the FAA's assessment of his country's aviation oversight was based on too few staff members and the "structure" of

the aviation authority.

Many countries on the FAA's list of below-standard aviation oversight—such as the Pacific Island nations of Nauru or Kiribati—are places that are not visited by many Americans.

Cuba isn't assessed by the FAA, because the U.S. doesn't have full diplomatic relations with the nation and doesn't allow direct flights. Many Americans such as Ronald Howard, a teacher in Atlanta, Ga., fly to Mexico or Canada to connect to flights to Cuba.

Howard, who flew to Havana last year from Cancun, Mexico, says he had an unsettling experience on a flight operated by Cubana airlines, the island nation's flagship carrier, which flies to Paris and other major cities.

Howard recalls a white mist spewing into the passenger cabin of the Russian-built Yak-42 aircraft during his flight. The mist, which could restrict visibility during an emergency evacuation, probably was from a faulty cooling and heating system, says John King, a former airline mechanic and safety advocate.

"The plane was smoking white mist all the way. The interior was ice cold, and the emergency exits were rusted," Howard recalls. The jet landed safely in Havana.

USA Today emailed four contacts listed on Cubana's website but did not get a response.

Cubana's last fatal accident was in 1999, and it has the worst accident rate of any airline from 1986 through 2010, says PlaneCrashInfo.com, a website that compiles accident statistics.

Consumer safety advocates question

whether countries such as Russia, China, India and Thailand meet minimum international safety standards, even though the FAA says they do.

The accident rates of those countries' airlines "belie the effectiveness of their civil aviation authorities," says Mary Schiavo, an aviation lawyer and a former inspector general for the Department of Transportation.

Frequent business traveler John Owens wonders whether his life was at risk on a flight within Russia two years ago. Owens was so frightened by his Aeroflot flight from Moscow to Samara, Russia, that he switched airlines for his return flight.

"The Ilyushin aircraft was so old and felt like it was being held together with duct tape," says Owens, a vice president of sales for a travel technology company. "It would shudder, shake and make very loud noises."

PlaneCrashInfo.com says Aeroflot has a poor fatal accident rate.

The FAA's assessments of foreign civil aviation authorities rely largely on self-reporting by nations to determine whether they are compliant with minimum safety standards, says Hudson, the consumer safety advocate.

In written answers to USA Today's questions, the FAA says for each country it conducts an in-depth, in-person evaluation that costs the agency \$25,000 to \$30,000. The FAA says it asks questions and validates information received.

Bonnie Rind of Newton, Mass., says she doesn't think the assessments are thorough or accurate. She says she has brought evidence of bribery, corruption and excessively long duty hours in Thailand's aviation system to FAA officials assessing the country's civil aviation authority, but they have turned their backs on the information.

Rind's brother, Stefan Woronoff, was among 90 people, including four other Americans, who were killed when a plane flown by a Thai airline, One-Two-Go, crashed in Phuket, Thailand, in September 2007.

The FAA says it's aware of Rind's concerns and has followed up with the Thai government about safety improvements since the accident. Thailand meets international standards, the FAA says.

Schiavo, who left her Inspector General post in 1996, says State Department relations with a nation are a factor in the FAA's assessments.

Schiavo says she "saw firsthand" the State Department's influence in FAA ratings. The FAA decided some countries didn't meet minimum standards, but State intervened and the FAA changed its assessments, Schiavo says.

The FAA says State Department relations with a foreign country do not influence the FAA's reviews.

The agency says its assessment program has been successful during the past 20 years, because the number of countries not meeting minimum international safety standards has dropped from about two-thirds of the countries evaluated.

No matter how many countries that the FAA says meet international safety standards, the agency's disregard for Rind's evidence about Thai aviation shows that the FAA's assessments are not to be trusted, says passenger-rights advocate Hanni.

Campus Life

2012 opens with a bang for Golden Harvest school



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Golden Harvest International School's participants in the K-2 division of the Primary Grade Forensic Competition pose at their school campus.

The year 2012 opened with bountiful blessings for Golden Harvest International School, its students winning numerous places and awards in the Primary Grade Forensic Competition held on Jan. 14, 2012, at the Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School.

Patience, hard work, time, love, and effort are like pieces of a puzzle that, when put together (by teachers and students alike), prove to be the keys to achieving success.

Once again, a job well done by students, a support well

given by the parents, and an endeavor well served by the teachers and staff of GHIS!

K-2 DIVISION

1st, Duo A: Michelle Leon Guerrero, Kyla Gabrielle Raquel

RF A: Christine Joyce Caluya
2nd, Duo B: James Michael Venus, Ivan Yuri J. Ferrera

DI A: Jude Dominic Litulumar

RF MC: Sukey Wu
3rd, DI A: Hannah Lacap

Duo B: Amber Sidney Sureta, Tyana Hix

C. Speak A: Hannah Lacap, Michelle Leon Guerrero, Kyla Raquel, Sukey Wu

4th, RF MB: Aaron Ignacio HI B: Sebastian Bernardo

Duo A: Kyle Caraig, Jude Dominic Litulumar

1st, DI A: Mark Daniel Ibanez C. Speak B: Vince Philip Salvador, Aaron Esquivel, Marione Corpus

2nd, John Isaac San Nicolas RF MCA: John Isaac San Nicolas

C. Speak A: Kris Angelo



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Grade 3 to 5 students of the Golden Harvest International School have their picture taken after participating in the Primary Grade Forensic Competition held on Jan. 14, 2012, at the Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School.

ACCELERATED READER

The Saipan International School takes pride in Alex Park, who has read over 90 books this year. That may not sound like a lot, but that means that he has read over 2,560,000 words! He also has almost 400 points in Accelerated Reader. His average reading level is a 5.8! With all of the sports and extra-curricular activities that he does out of school it is impressive that he has been able to read this much. We hope that he will continue the hard work! Excellent job, Alex!



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Lopez, Leunyce Regalado, Kyna Sales

Green Meadow students stand out at forensic competition

Parents, school management and staff, supporters, and friends once again beamed with pride and joy after another excellent showing by students of Green Meadow School at the recent forensic competition held at the Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School on Jan. 14, 2012.

Competitors from Green Meadow School were exceptionally successful in the K2 Division, while participants in 3-5 Division performed equally well.

"Congratulations to participants and winners. Keep up the good work. Congratulations too to coaches, PGFC coordinator and volunteer judges and thank you for your time, cooperation and support," the school said in a statement.

K-2 DIVISION:

1st Place, Dramatic Interpretation: Jill Anne Mallari

1st Place, Humorous Interpretation: Raphael Christian Galang

1st Place, Duo Interpretation B: Kezia Arugay, Cloe Lagmay

1st Place, Choral Speaking



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Green Meadow School students and teachers have their picture taken after participating in the forensic competition held at the Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School on Jan. 14, 2012.

A: Lyndon Digno, Christian Bhert Daniel, Raphael Christian Galang, Christian Ted Pamintuan

an, Keith Villasin

2nd Place, Humorous Interpretation: Jill Anne Mallari

2nd Place, Reader's Forum MA: Kezia Arugay

3rd Place, Reader's Forum A:

Cloe Lagmay

4th Place, Choral Speaking A: Angeline Faith Cacdac, Jazmyn

COACHES: Bona Angeles, Manuel Castro, Ana Liza Quiambao

PGFC Coordinator: Ellen Alejo

Volunteer judges: Analyn Dasan, Elvie Armea, Beth Capili

3-5 DIVISION:

1st Place, Choral Speaking A: En Ming Cacdac, Pionnah Rosej Gregorio, Gabrielle Shanikka Flores, Anniea Saturno, Robin Reyes

2nd Place, Humorous Interpretation: En Ming Cacdac

2nd Place, Choral Speaking B: Robin Agbayani, Ian Willard Ranin, Miguel Mallari

3rd Place, Duo Interpretation: Gabrielle Shanikka Flores, Anniea Saturno

3rd Place, Choral Speaking A: Art Vincent Alfeche, Kimvherly Dela Cruz, Ashley Reganit

4th Place, Humorous Interpretation: Miguel Mallari

5th Place, Dramatic Interpretation: Pionnah Rosej Gregorio

5th Place, Duo Interpretation: Art Vincent Alfeche, Ian Willard Ranin

Life & Style

East London is transformed for the Olympic Games

By SYLVIA HUI
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON (AP)—It was called “outcast London” for its squalid slums in Victorian times, has the dubious reputation as the haunt of Jack the Ripper, and one of Britain’s most polluted rivers runs through its long-derelict shipyards and warehouses.

It’s no wonder that for a long time, east London has been all but ignored by tourists who stick to the West End, the home of blockbuster musicals, royal palaces, Harrods and Oxford Street.

This year, those prejudices are likely to change as the Olympics inject huge investments into changing the face of the East End.

Massive redevelopment works in the area have already given it a dramatic makeover. In Stratford, a former marsh and one of the city’s poorest areas, a pristine Olympic Stadium, a gigantic new shopping mall and upgraded train links are already in place. In less than six months’ time there will be cycle paths, green spaces, and cleaned up riverbanks.

All that will bring new interest to a part of London that, though long neglected, has recently become recognized for growing its own elite fashion, arts and high-tech business communities.

And so, if Brick Lane is the farthest east you have ever ventured, now is the time to visit the city’s fastest-changing corner—you will be pleasantly surprised.

What’s to see? Start from Brick Lane, but perhaps skip some of the famous but overpriced curry houses. Instead, wander northeast up to the Shoreditch and Dalston areas for their weekend markets, vibrant nightlife, diverse ethnic cuisine and trendy vintage shops.

The area’s lower rents have long attracted young artists and musicians—although in recent

Enjoy London’s Olympic spirit without a ticket

LONDON (AP)—No tickets for the 2012 Olympics? Don’t despair: You don’t need one to enjoy the games and the party atmosphere in London this summer.

Although most sporting events take place in ticketed Olympic venues, there is plenty to see and do elsewhere in the run-up to and during the games.

From live Olympic screenings in Hyde Park to world music performances by the River Thames, a huge list of free and affordable events promises that visitors—sports fans or not—can get a taste of Olympic excitement without spending a fortune.

The festivities kick off months ahead of the July 27 start of the games, as soon as the Olympic torch arrives in Britain from

years gentrification has hiked property prices, drawn in celebrities and hipsters, and pushed struggling artists to seek out warehouse spaces still farther east.

Even so, there is still a bohemian, appealingly scruffy vibe about the place. Unlike in the West End, development in the east has been uneven and spontaneous. A couple of cutting-edge boutiques would turn an unassuming side street quite suddenly into the city’s trendiest spot, and high-concept art spaces often sit right next to fried chicken takeaways and dollar stores.

The Olympic Games will definitely bring new tourist traffic to the neighborhood—though many locals weren’t sure if they liked the idea.

“Don’t care about it,” Speedie Gazelle said of the Olympics. Gazelle, who owns a small shop selling what he calls “retro kitsch,” wants his area to stay “fashionable, but not touristy,” like New York’s Lower East Side in the mid-90s.

One of the biggest obstacles to visiting the east used to be the lack of easy public transport connections to central London.

That’s not a problem anymore: Along with improvements to the rundown Tube stations and creaky trains all over London, authorities have installed brand-new, comfortable trains that now connect the city center with communities in the East End, with nine transport lines feeding into Stratford, the



In this Sunday, Jan. 29, 2012 photo, a man is being served at a food stall on Brick Lane in east London. AP

Olympic hub.

A high-speed train, called the Javelin Shuttle, will link Stratford with St. Pancras, the renovated Eurostar terminal.

East London’s canals, long notorious for their murky, shallow waters and all-around shabbiness, will also be cleaned up. The backbone of London’s commercial activity before the railways took over, these overlooked waterways used to be a magnet for rubbish and muggers.

With the Olympics, though, they—along with the polluted River Lea, right next to the Stadium—will be in the spotlight. Officials want spectators to walk or cycle to the games site, and the towpaths along the waterways, snaking from the west to east along Victoria Park, are ideal.

A mass volunteer campaign is under way to engage Londoners to tidy up the network, hopefully finishing by July. One charity, Thames21, is trying to recruit 4,000 volunteers, many of them school children, to pick up the litter, remove weeds, and plant flowers to beautify the canals.

That’s a work in progress, just

like the Olympic Park itself—an impressive sight worth making a trip for, even though it still resembles a giant gray puddle studded with some gleaming, empty new buildings. In a few months, it will transform into what officials called the largest new urban park that Europe has seen in 150 years, a haven complete with “broad sweeping lawns” and wildlife habitats for birds and bees.

No one is sure whether the so-called “Olympic legacy” will develop smoothly. Worriers say that Stratford could easily become another Canary Wharf—

For the local residents, all this is just the beginning of an ambitious regeneration plan—and many years of disruption. According to planners, the Olympic building project is expected to continue to deliver thousands of new homes and jobs in the next 25 years.

No one is sure whether the so-called “Olympic legacy” will develop smoothly. Worriers say that Stratford could easily become another Canary Wharf—

the affluent skyscraper-studded redevelopment, also in the East End, that’s sometimes criticized for its indifference to the poverty in its surrounding community.

In the meantime, one building project has certainly brought more revenue to Stratford. Right across from the games site is the Westfield Stratford City mall, a glossy retail palace said to be the biggest in Europe with 300 shops, a casino and its own faux “streets.”

Rising incongruously from a neighborhood of drab brown streets, it has been packed with visitors ever since it opened in October.

For some, it’s a tasteless monstrosity, blaring pop music from every corner and flashing dazzling images from multiple giant screens. But for many young locals who have long looked enviously at the West End’s shopping conveniences, it’s a godsend.

“This place used to be so malnourished,” said Cicero Fernando, a 29-year-old trainee doctor walking home with groceries from the mall’s upmarket Waitrose food store. “Thank goodness I can now shop in my favorite stores.”

That can only be a good sign for the future of east London, he said.

Message of Appreciation

We the children and families of
Angelina SN Muna

*Lovingly known as
“Angie or Kang-Kang”*

would like to extend our
most heartfelt appreciation to
our relatives and friends who
surrounded us with their love,
prayers, kindness and support.

Your thoughtful gesture and kind words have
consoled our hearts beyond our expectation in
such difficult times. Your presence at the nightly
mass and most especially at the mass of Christian
burial was very comforting

We will always remember you in our hearts and
prayers.

“May God Bless You All”

Thank you very much and Si Yu’us Ma’ase.

From The Children & Family

Finally, an awards show with some surprises and spontaneity

By CHRISTY LEMIRE
AP MOVIE CRITIC

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The Screen Actors Guild Awards featured some unexpected winners, including “The Help” for best overall cast performance and French actor Jean Dujardin for best actor in “The Artist” alongside some of the longtime favorites in movies and television.

But there was a looseness and a playfulness that permeated the Shrine Exposition Center Sunday night—maybe because it was a room full of people who love to perform, without the rigidity of one single host to lead them.

Unlike the great expectations that came with the sharp-tongued Ricky Gervais’ reprisal at the Golden Globes a couple weeks ago or the much-anticipated return of Billy Crystal to the Academy Awards next month, there was no master of ceremonies at the SAG Awards. The presenters and winners seemed to have more room to improvise and put their own spin on the evening—but mercifully, the show itself still managed to wrap up on time after just two hours.

And so we had three of the stars of best-cast nominee “Bridesmaids”—Kristen Wiig, Maya Rudolph and Melissa McCarthy—introducing their comedy with a joke about turning the name “Scorsese” into a drinking game, which became a running gag throughout the night. When HBO’s “Boardwalk Empire” won the award for best drama series cast, among the first words star Steve Buscemi uttered in accepting the prize were “Martin Scorsese”—he just happens to be one of the show’s executive producers.

One of the more exciting moments of the night was the announcement of Dujardin’s name in the best-actor category for his performance in the silent, black-and-white homage “The Artist.” In winning the award for his portrayal of a silent-film star who finds his career in decline with the arrival of talkies, Dujardin definitely boosts his chances at the Oscars on Feb. 26. Little-known in the United States before this, the French comic bested bigger names like George Clooney (“The Descendants”), Brad Pitt (“Moneyball”) and Leonardo DiCaprio (“J. Edgar”).

If he follows this up with an Academy Award, Dujardin would become the first French actor ever to take the prize. Asked backstage how it would feel, Dujardin launched into a jaunty rendition of “La Marseillaise,” the French national anthem.

“Pressure, big pressure,” Dujardin then added in his halting English. “It’s unbelievable. It’s amazing already. Too early to tell.”

Viola Davis and Octavia



Jean Dujardin poses backstage with the award for outstanding performance by a male actor in a leading role for “The Artist” at the 18th Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards on Sunday Jan. 29, 2012 in Los Angeles. AP

Spencer continued to cement their front-runner status in the actress and supporting actress categories, respectively, for their formidable work in “The Help.” Both women play black maids in 1960s Mississippi who dare to go public about the bigotry they’ve endured.

“I just have to say that the stain of racism and sexism is not just for people of color or women. It’s all of our burden, all of us,” Davis said, accepting the ensemble prize on behalf of her “The Help” co-stars.

Backstage, Davis said of her own victory: “A few more people checked my name in the box for whatever reason. This time I kind of fooled them.”

Meanwhile, Christopher Plummer picked up yet another supporting-actor prize for his lovely turn as an elderly widower who finally comes out as gay in “Beginners.” Plummer won at the Golden Globes and is nominated for an Oscar. He would become the oldest actor ever to win an Academy Award at age 82, two years older than Jessica Tandy was when she won best actress for “Driving Miss Daisy.”

Backstage, Plummer joked when asked if he would like to win an Oscar, an honor so elusive during his esteemed 60-year career that he did not even receive his first Academy Award nomination until two years ago, for “The Last Station.”

“No, I think it’s frighteningly

boring,” Plummer said. “That’s an awful question. Listen, we don’t go into this business preoccupied by awards. If we did, we wouldn’t last five minutes.”

The win for overall cast for “The Help,” when “The Artist” and “The Descendants” have been the favorites all along, makes the conversation more interesting but it isn’t necessarily an indicator of how the film will do come Oscar time.

The guild’s ensemble prize, considered its equivalent of a best-picture honor, has a spotty record at predicting what will win the top award at the Oscars. While “The King’s Speech” won both honors a year ago, the SAG ensemble recipient has gone on to claim the top Oscar only eight times in the 16 years since the guild added the category.

The winners at the SAG ceremony often do go on to earn Oscars, however. All four acting recipients at SAG last year later took home Oscars—Colin Firth for “The King’s Speech,” Natalie Portman for “Black Swan” and Christian Bale and Melissa Leo for “The Fighter.”

On the television side, comedy series awards went to “Modern Family” for best ensemble; Alec Baldwin as best actor for “30 Rock”; and Betty White as best actress for “Hot in Cleveland.”

“You can’t name me, without naming those other wonderful women on ‘Hot in

Cleveland,’” the 90-year-old White said. “This nomination belongs to four of us. Please, please know that I’m dealing them right in with this. I’m not going to let them keep this, but I’ll let them see it.”

The TV drama show winners were: Jessica Lange as best actress for “American Horror Story”; and Buscemi as best actor for “Boardwalk Empire.”

For TV movie or miniseries, Kate Winslet won as best actress for “Mildred Pierce,” while Paul Giamatti was named best actor for “Too Big to Fail.”

The guild gave its lifetime achievement award to Mary Tyler Moore, presented by Dick Van Dyke, her co-star on the 1960s sit-com “The Dick Van Dyke Show.”

Moore recalled that when she entered show business at age 18 in 1955, there were already six others Mary Moores in the Screen Actors Guild. Told to change her name, she quickly added Tyler, the middle name she shares with her father, George.

“I was Mary Tyler Moore. I spoke it out loud. Mary Tyler Moore. It sounded right so I wrote it down on the form, and it looked right,” she said. “It was right. SAG was happy, my father was happy, and tonight, after having the privilege of working in this business among the most creative and talented people imaginable, I too am happy, after all.”

Marchesa has a big night at SAG Award red carpet

BY MARCELA ISAZA
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The big fashion names were there on the Screen Actors Guild red carpet—almost as if it were the Oscars. But the gowns from Marchesa, Balenciaga, Valentino and Givenchy were just a little bit more fun and flirty, comfortable and flowing than you’ll likely see at the serious and more formal Academy Awards next month, keeping with the vibe that the SAGs are more of a celebration of the acting craft than a competition among A-listers.

Viola Davis wore a Grecian silk chiffon Marchesa gown with antique gold detailing. “The white against my dark skin. The gold, it made me feel very elegant, sexy and it’s comfortable,” explained Davis Sunday night.

Also wearing Marchesa was Colombian bombshell Sofia Vergara, in a custom-made magenta strapless fitted mermaid gown. George Clooney’s girlfriend Stacy Kiebler, was another fan of the house with her black lace fishtail number.

Angelina Jolie kept her look simple in a black, cowl-neck draped gown by British designer Jenny Packham. She paired it with vintage jewelry. “I don’t often wear it, and I liked these pieces when I saw them,” she said.

Glenn Close also went with black. “I love it because it’s Zac Posen,” Close said, noting a link between the taffeta-and-tulle gown and her nominated film, “Albert Nobbs.”

“I think it has intonations of a Victorian dress, because ‘Albert Nobbs’ takes place in Victorian Ireland. Because Prince Albert had died, Queen Victoria always wore black so a lot of people wore black and also this same material,” she said. “So I feel comfortable and fabulous.”

Julianne Margulies wore a label she had been longing to wear for a while: Calvin Klein. It was a fitted, embroidered strapless dress in a shade of dove gray that looked almost white. “I’ve never worn Calvin Klein and I love the fabric and the way it just flowed down. It’s comfortable and I thought it was pretty,” Margulies said.

Berenice Bejo also beamed in her ivory-colored beaded Ralph Lauren gown, and Tilda Swinton wore a white pleated Lanvin dress.

Michelle Williams, who has played it fairly demure on the red carpet lately, though, went bold in a red Valentino with red lace sleeves.



Viola Davis poses backstage with her award for outstanding performance by a female actor in a leading role for “The Help” at the 18th Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards on Sunday Jan. 29, 2012 in Los Angeles. AP

Jack White to release 1st solo album in April

NASHVILLE, Tennessee (AP)—Jack White is releasing his first solo album “Blunderbuss” on April 24.

White released a single, “Love Interruption,” from the record Monday and was expected to make it available for sale Monday night on iTunes.



White

announced the breakup of that pioneering rock duo last year. White also is a member of The Raconteurs and The Dead Weather.

White offered few details about the new album in a news release Monday. He said the songs were “written from scratch, had nothing to do with anyone or anything else but my own expression, my own colors on my own canvas.”

The album is the former White Stripes frontman’s first record since he

Scherzinger, Jones not returning to ‘X Factor’

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Nicole Scherzinger and Steve Jones are out at “The X Factor.”

A Fox spokeswoman said Monday that the judge and host will not return for the show’s second season. No other details were provided.

Jones, a British TV personality, called his departure “a shame” on Twitter and added that he couldn’t complain, “as I’ve had a great time.” He gave no reason why he wasn’t returning to the singing contest.

Jones was originally slated to host “X Factor” alongside Scherzinger, who replaced British pop star Cheryl Cole as a judge when executive producer Simon Cowell and other producers had second thoughts about Cole joining the series.

Cowell, Paula Abdul and L.A. Reid served as the other judges on the show’s first season.

Despite consistent viewership, “X Factor” has failed to achieve popularity similar to “American Idol,” which Cowell left to import “X Factor” from the U.K. to the U.S.

A spokeswoman for Scherzinger did not immediately return a message seeking comment.

The second season of “X Factor” is set to debut later this year.



In this Sept. 14, 2011 file photo, host Steve Jones poses with judge Nicole Scherzinger at a world premiere screening event for the new television series, “The X Factor,” in Los Angeles.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Shirley MacLaine to join TV show ‘Downton Abbey’

LONDON (AP)—Oscar-winning actress Shirley MacLaine is joining Britain’s popular television series “Downton Abbey.” The 77-year-old will join the cast when they start filming next month. She will play the mother of Lady Grantham, portrayed by Elizabeth McGovern, in the third season of the hit period drama, which took Golden Globe and Emmy prizes for best miniseries or TV movie. Gareth Neame of Carnival Films, which produces the show, said Monday that MacLaine’s character will be a “wonderful combatant” for Maggie Smith’s Dowager Countess. The series have garnered large numbers of fans in Britain, the U.S. and elsewhere.

Willie Nelson campaigns for US congressman

LORAIN, Ohio (AP)—Country music icon Willie Nelson has come to Ohio to sing in support of an old friend, U.S. Rep. Dennis Kucinich. Nelson performed a sold-out benefit for the congressman on Sunday. Redistricting has thrown Kucinich into a congressional primary battle with another veteran Democrat, Marcy Kaptur. Nelson previously campaigned for Kucinich during his long-shot bids for president. Kaptur’s campaign said last week that while Kucinich brings singers to Ohio, Kaptur brings jobs. Multiple news outlets report that Kucinich replied during a news conference before Sunday’s concert that he has worked to save steel jobs in the region.

Puck to be honored by James Beard Foundation

The so-called Oscars of the food world this year will give the ultimate nod to a man best known for feeding celebrities at the real Oscars. The James Beard Foundation’s Lifetime Achievement award this year will go to Wolfgang Puck, whose menu for The Academy Awards Governors Ball is almost as eagerly anticipated as the awards themselves. Puck—who has won multiple honors from the foundation and is the only chef to have twice received its Most Outstanding Chef award—was chosen for his talent as a chef and restaurateur, as well as for his history of revolutionizing how American chefs think about food, foundation president Susan Ungaro said in a release. Puck, whose cooking combines classic French technique with a focus on seasonal and local ingredients, has been an iconic voice in California cuisine. Born in Austria, he moved to Los Angeles in 1975. In 1982, he opened Spago, the restaurant for which he remains best known. Today, he has 20 restaurants around the country. The award will be presented during the foundation’s annual awards gala on May 7 in New York.

Actress clarifies remark about being gay by choice

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Actress Cynthia Nixon is trying to clarify her earlier remarks that got her in hot water with some fellow gay rights activists.

The “Sex and the City” star’s personal life became an exercise in the politics of sexual orientation last week when The New York Times Magazine quoted Nixon saying that for her, being gay was a conscious choice. Nixon has been in a relationship with a woman for eight years. Be-



Nixon

fore that, she spent 15 years and had two children with a man.

After some gay rights activists complained that Nixon’s remarks could be used to deny a biological basis for homosexuality, the ac-

tress on Monday released a statement to The Advocate magazine explaining she is technically bisexual, and not by choice.

Nixon told the magazine: “What I have ‘chosen’ is to be in a gay relationship.”

Actor who was Mr. Pitt on ‘Seinfeld’ dies

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Ian Abercrombie, a veteran British stage and screen actor whose TV roles included Elaine’s boss Mr. Pitt on “Seinfeld” and the voice of Chancellor Palpatine in the animated TV series “Star Wars: The Clone Wars,” has died. He was 77.

A website statement from LucasArts said Abercrombie died Friday. A friend, Cathy Lind Hayes, told the Los Angeles Times that Abercrombie died at a Los Angeles hospital from complications of kidney failure and recently had been diagnosed with lymphoma.

“Though he played a villain on our show, you would be hard pressed to meet a kinder person,” said Dave Filoni, a supervising



Abercrombie

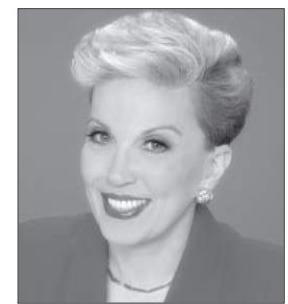
Abercrombie began his career as a dancer and made his American stage debut in a 1951 production of “Stalag 17.”

He appeared in the film “Army of Darkness” and on such TV shows as “Wizards of Waverly Place” and “Birds of Prey,” in which he played Alfred Pennyworth, Bruce Wayne’s butler.

He also voiced the worldly owl Ambrose in the animated movie “Rango” starring Johnny Depp.

Woman in love with fiance’s twin is now in double trouble

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I am 26 and have been dating “Mike” for four years. We met in our senior year of college and recently became engaged. I’m looking forward to being married and starting a family, but there’s one “small” problem. I’m in love with Mike’s identical twin brother, “Matt.”

Mike and Matt are identical in appearance, but Matt is funnier, more outgoing and affectionate than my fiance. I didn’t know he existed until a year ago because they had a falling out at their high school graduation and didn’t reconcile until recently.

When I met Matt, I knew right away he was the one for me, but I continued dating Mike because I didn’t want to ruin his re-established relationship with his brother. Matt reciprocates my feelings. He has told me he’s in love with me and wants to date me.

I know I shouldn’t have accepted Mike’s proposal, but I don’t want to hurt him or start another fight between him and his twin, but I also don’t want to be married to the wrong man for the rest of my life. I’m unsure what to do. The wedding date has been set. Help!

IN LOVE WITH THE DOUBLE

DEAR IN LOVE: You should have put the brakes on the relationship with Mike the minute you realized you were attracted to Matt. The engagement should be ended immediately. That you would not only continue to date Mike but also accept his proposal of marriage knowing you were more attracted to his twin was cruel.

If Matt starts seeing you after the breakup, it will probably cause a permanent rift between them. It will be interesting to see what happens when you become available because with some people the “apple” that’s just out of reach is the one that’s most enticing—and you may wind up married to neither brother.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My 4-year-old son made a snowman in our front yard and then went inside to take a nap. Our neighbor came over with his son—age 16—to talk to my husband.

When I brought my 3-year-old daughter outside to see the snowman her brother made, I was horrified to see it was now “anatomically correct”! I asked my husband who did it, and he said it was the neighbor’s son. My husband thought it was funny and that I was overreacting.

I think the behavior was inappropriate, and the fact that my daughter saw it and wondered what was “hanging on the snowman” was no laughing matter. If the neighbor wanted to make an X-rated snowman, he should have made it in his own front yard. Do you think I’m being too sensitive?

FAILS TO SEE THE HUMOR

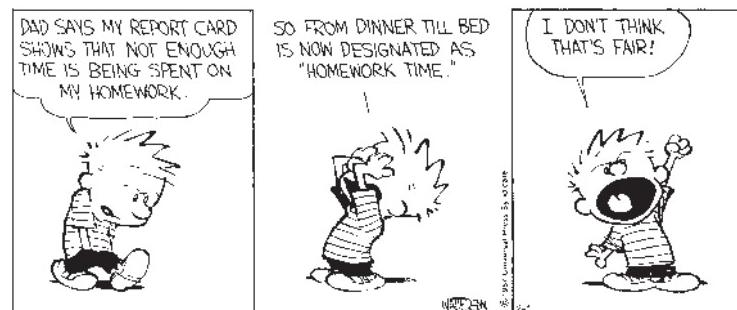
DEAR FAILS TO SEE THE HUMOR: Yes, I do. While I agree the neighbor boy’s “artistic endeavor” was in poor taste, it provided an opportunity to answer your daughter’s question in a matter-of-fact way and explain there are anatomical differences between boys and girls. You could also have explained that private parts are not supposed to be displayed in public, and asked your husband to remove them as you took your little girl back into the house. Seeing the snowman would not traumatize your daughter as much as seeing you shocked and upset.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write *Dear Abby* at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in “What Every Teen Should Know.” Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes



By Bill Waterson

Garfield®



By Jim Davis

Adam@home

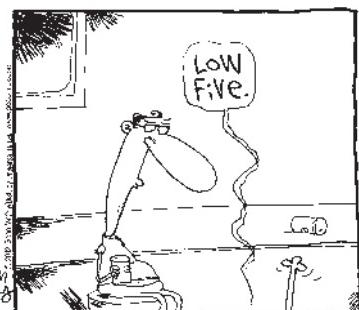


By Bryan Basset

The Duplex



By Glenn McCoy

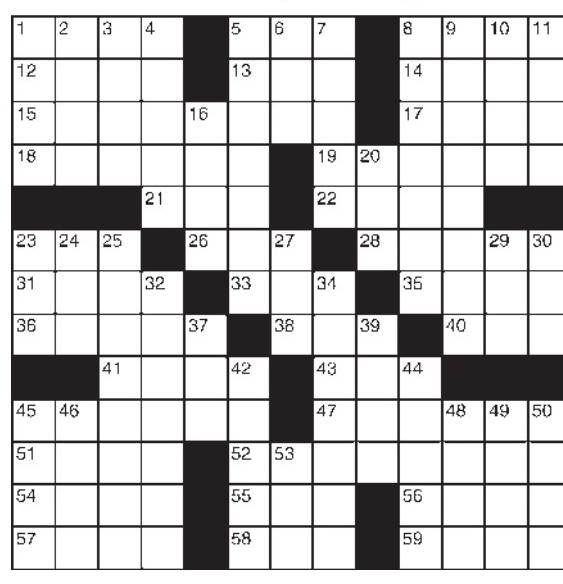


CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS		38	Kipling	lad	59	Bean that provides	20	Have a bug	
1	Former larva	40	Bribe	41	Barber's concern	23	Cleo's slayer	24	"CSI" evidence
5	2004 horror movie	43	Zilch	45	"Burnt" crayon	25	Mindless ones	26	Harbor structure
8	Composer Khachaturian	47	Cause of weakness	2	Incite	27	Erstwhile acorn	28	Swine
12	Rainbow	51	Exotic berry	4	Bonfire	29	—	30	Leftovers
13	Spy-novel org.	52	Marines, slangily	5	Sought	30	Zedong	31	Acronyms
14	Lima's land	54	Scepters	6	Help	32	Elton John or Billy Joel	33	Crack my concrete abdominals.
15	Intellectuals	55	Lemieux milieu	7	Nasty nesters	34	Mosque tower	35	Marbles
17	Rhyming tributes	56	Rote of football	8	"Last Supper" figure	37	Transgression	36	Concrete abdominals.
18	Vend used goods	57	Meet Me — Louis"	9	Carrot-tops	39	Ho Chi —	37	Marbles
19	Turkish officials	58	Old hand	10	Vicinity	42	Indira's son	38	Concrete abdominals.
21	Dine	59	Month	11	Tousle	44	Welsh veggies	39	Concrete abdominals.
22	Location	60	Hebrew	12	Louis"	45	Rani's wrap	40	Concrete abdominals.
23	Oklahoma city	61	—	13	He	46	PC picture	41	Concrete abdominals.
26	Writer Buscaglia	62	—	14	—	48	BLT topper	42	Concrete abdominals.
28	Camel's cousin	63	—	15	—	49	One way to stand by	43	Concrete abdominals.
31	Quick cut	64	—	16	—	50	On the briny	44	Concrete abdominals.
33	Water barrier	65	—	17	—	53	Expert	45	Concrete abdominals.
35	Dutch cheese	66	—	18	—			46	Concrete abdominals.
36	Ms. Hilton	67	—	19	—			47	Concrete abdominals.
		68	—	20	—			48	Concrete abdominals.
		69	—	21	—			49	Concrete abdominals.
		70	—	22	—			50	Concrete abdominals.
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		72	—	24	—			52	Concrete abdominals.
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		78	—	30	—			58	Concrete abdominals.
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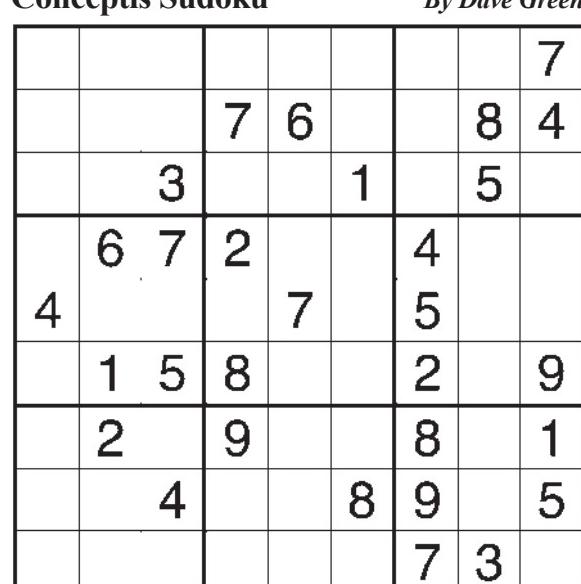
Yesterday's answer 2-1

**STUMPED?**

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-800-226-5955 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green



Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

5	9	4	2	3	6	7	8	1
1	3	6	8	4	7	2	9	5
2	8	7	5	1	9	6	4	3
4	2	3	6	8	1	9	5	7
7	6	5	9	2	4	3	1	8
9	1	8	7	5	3	4	2	6
3	5	1	4	6	2	8	7	9
8	7	2	3	9	5	1	6	4
6	4	9	1	7	8	5	3	2

Difficulty Level ★★

2/01

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

CHARLIZE THERON

Solution: 7 letters

Y	T	F	I	F	T	E	E	T	L	L	A	B
R	O	H	L	T	C	M	O	G	Q	M	S	C
A	E	U	A	A	E	R	S	U	I	R	A	A
G	X	K	N	T	A	L	U	A	E	R	H	V
N	R	D	C	G	T	N	I	H	F	B	M	E
I	Y	E	E	A	D	H	T	A	M	O	L	A
K	A	R	E	A	R	E	I	E	N	N	E	R
L	D	I	Y	N	M	C	V	N	M	J	D	N
A	U	T	E	O	E	O	T	I	G	Y	O	S
W	L	A	R	T	N	Y	N	U	L	Y	M	B
P	T	P	I	T	I	U	E	N	S	O	D	L
E	S	U	E	S	T	H	A	S	N	O	W	U
E	S	E	W	E	S	W	R	E	C	N	A	D
L	W	A	S	A								

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FAX: (670) 234-9537

ATTORNEYS FOR Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN
MARIANA ISLANDS

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION,	CIVIL ACTION NO. 11-0034
Plaintiff,	SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATION
-v-	
FRANCES ALDAN VALDEZ and ELISEO ASUNCION VALDEZ,	
Defendants.	

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANTS:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy which is served upon you hereby, within twenty-one (21) days after the fourth publication of this Summons, and to deliver or mail a copy of our answer to THE LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC, the Plaintiff's attorneys, whose address is Post Office Box 5222, Saipan, MP 96950, as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan. It may be prepared and signed for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

DATED, this 27th day of January, 2012 by order of the Court.

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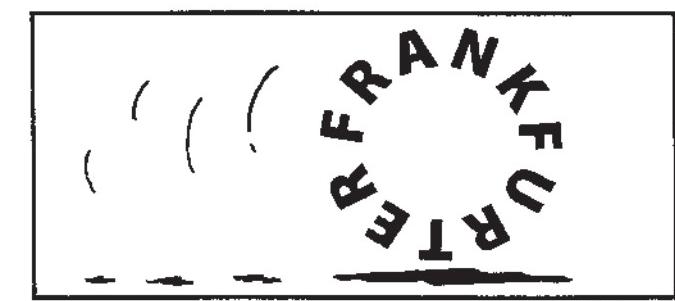
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Heat shake off slow start, beat Hornets



MIAMI (AP)—LeBron James and Dwyane Wade each scored 22 points, Mike Miller added 14 off the bench and the Miami Heat shook off a slow start to run away from the New Orleans Hornets 109-95 on Monday night.

James added 11 rebounds and eight assists for Miami, which won for the eighth time in nine games and ended up with six players in double figures. Chris Bosh and Norris Cole each scored 12 for the Heat, and Mario Chalmers added 11.

Miami was down 45-33 midway through the second quarter, then out-scored New Orleans 76-50 the rest of the way.

Jarrett Jack and Carl Landry each scored 14 for New Orleans, which lost for the 17th time in 19 games after a 2-0 start. Emeka Okafor scored 13 points and Greivis Vasquez added 11 for the Hornets, who only managed 25 rebounds—the lowest total in the NBA this season. Miami had 39 rebounds, and James had more by himself than any two Hornets combined.

There were all sorts of indicators suggesting that Miami would get off to a less-than-ideal start.

It was Miami's third game in four nights, though all were at home. Monday's tip-off came about 24 hours after Sunday's down-to-the-wire epic against Chicago, where the Heat win wasn't secure until 0.1 seconds remained. And the second night of back-to-backs have been trouble all season for Miami, which had been 3-3 in those contests—including both of its home defeats, those coming against Atlanta and Milwaukee.

So sure enough, the Heat started slowly—and found themselves in a 12-point hole against a team with the worst record in the Western Conference.

New Orleans made 10 of its first 11 shots, then used a 16-6 run in the second quarter to build what was a 45-33 lead after Xavier Henry connected on a 3-pointer. With that, Heat coach Erik Spoelstra called time-out.

Whatever he said in that huddle worked wonders.

When play resumed, Wade got going, and the game changed for good. Wade scored 11 straight Miami points to erase the deficit almost single-handedly—13 out of 15 points as well, assisting a basket by James to account for the other two—and the Heat went into halftime up 51-49.

They were just getting started.

Less than a minute into the third quarter, Hornets coach Monty Williams was calling time-out, sensing the game was slipping away.

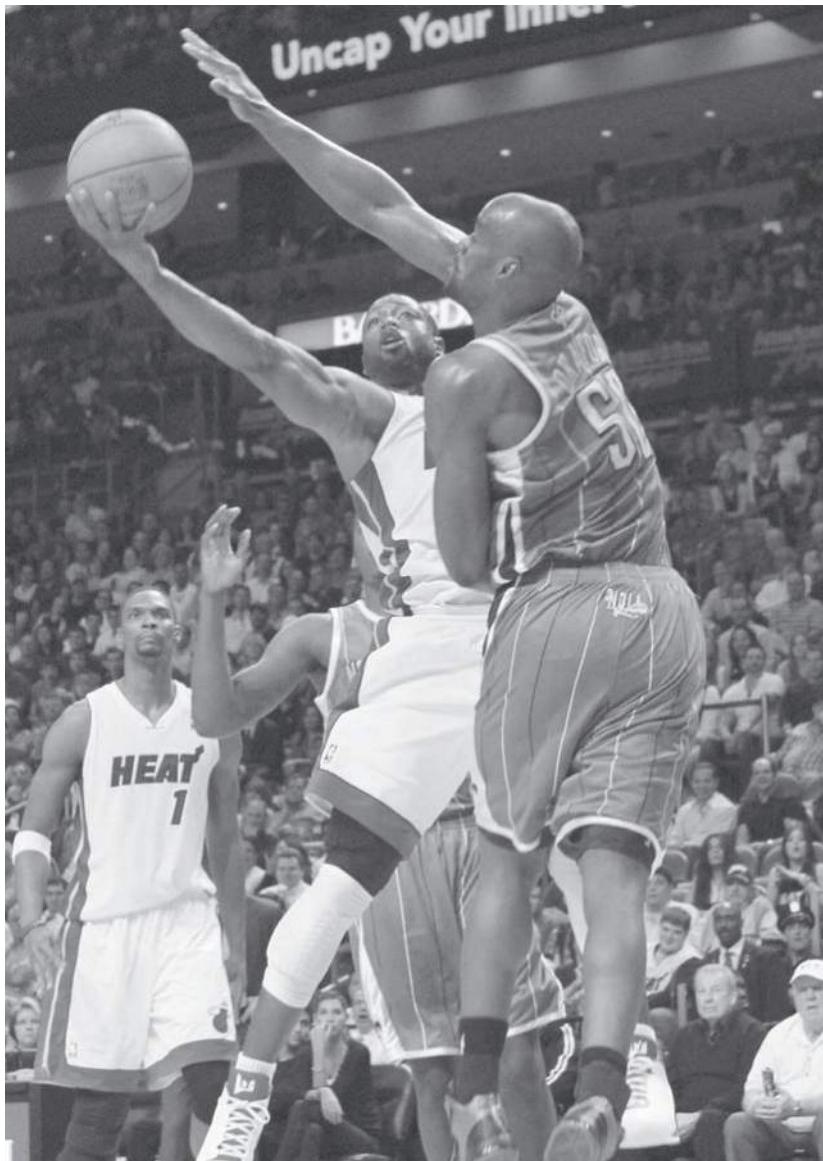
And it was.

Miami scored the first nine points of the third, stretching the lead to 60-49 and capping what was a 27-4 run over a span of less than eight minutes. James scored 14 points in the quarter, Chalmers made all three of his shots—all from 3-point range—and the Miami lead was up to 87-68 by the end of the period.

By then, the only drama left was whether James would get his 33rd career triple-double. Instead, he got the fourth quarter off.

Clippers 112, Thunder 100

In Los Angeles, Chris Paul had 26 points



AP
Miami Heat' Dwyane Wade (3) prepares to shoot as New Orleans Hornets' Emeka Okafor (50) defends in the first half of an NBA basketball game in Miami, Monday, Jan. 30, 2012.

and 14 assists, and Blake Griffin added 22 points and a monstrous dunk as Los Angeles snapped Oklahoma City's four-game winning streak in a matchup of division leaders.

Caron Butler also scored 22 points

and DeAndre Jordan had 11 points and 11 rebounds as the Pacific-leading Clippers won their third in a row, dunking with high-flying abandon against the team with the NBA's best record at 16-4.

Selig expects expanded playoffs to start this year



NEW YORK

(AP)—Commissioner Bud Selig expects baseball to expand its playoffs this season.

Players and owners have already agreed to add an additional wild-card team in each league, but are still deciding whether it would take effect this year or in 2013. Selig said there are scheduling issues to be worked out—once they are, the new 10-team format would begin with a one-game playoff.

"I really believe we'll have the wild card for 2012, this year," Selig said Friday night in Chicago at a White Sox fan festival. "Clubs really want it. I don't think I've ever seen an issue that the clubs want more than to have the extra wild card this year."

"We're working on dates right now. That'll all take place. It looks to me like we'll have it because I've told everybody we have to have it. It'll be exciting. One-game playoff, it will start the playoffs in a very exciting manner," he said.

A little more than two months before opening day, Major League Baseball hoped to put an end to uncertainty.

Add a bat or an arm to compete for that extra wild card? No telling whether that makes any sense.

"That's the last thing on my mind,"

Cleveland Indians manager Manny Acta said this week. "I'm trying to win my division and I can't be concerned about that stuff. But the more the merrier."

"It gives us and everybody else a better chance to make the playoffs. But it's not on my mind because you don't build a system or build a team counting on the commissioner is going to change the playoff format," he said.

MLB and the players' association have reached a consensus that ties for division titles will be broken on the field under the new playoff format, a person familiar with the talks told The Associated Press. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because a deal hadn't been finalized.

Since 1995, head-to-head record has been used to determine first place if both teams are going to the post-season. But with the start of a one-game, winner-take-all wild-card round, the sides agreed that the difference between first place and a wild-card berth is too important to decide with a formula and a tie-breaker game would be played.

Negotiators plan to talk again next week and decide by March 1 on whether the extra round will begin this year.

"I think most clubs at this point no

Kevin Durant had 36 points and 13 rebounds, and Russell Westbrook added 31 points for the Northwest-leading Thunder, whose league-best road record dropped to 8-3. They had won 11 of their previous 12.

Bulls 98, Wizards 88

In Washington, Derrick Rose scored a season-high 35 points, Carlos Boozer had 18 and Kyle Korver added 17 to lead Chicago over Washington.

One day after a four-point loss in Miami, the Bulls rebounded to improve their Eastern Conference-leading record to 18-5. They had dropped two of three.

Meanwhile, the Wizards have lost 16 of 20. Washington won two of its previous three games — both against the woeful Charlotte Bobcats, who have the worst record in the NBA.

John Wall led the Wizards with 20 points.

Mavericks 122, Suns 99

In Phoenix, Vince Carter scored 21 points against a Phoenix team that's still paying him as Dallas took advantage of Steve Nash's absence to rout the Suns.

Nash, the NBA assists leader, was out with a bruised left thigh.

Carter was waived by Phoenix when the lockout ended, but his contract still guaranteed him \$4 million. He would have made \$18 million had he stayed with Phoenix.

Delonte West scored a season-high 25 on 9-of-12 shooting.

Longtime Sun Shawn Marion scored 20 for the Mavericks and Dirk Nowitzki had 10 points in his second game back after missing four to rest his sore right knee.

76ers 74, Magic 69

In Philadelphia, Andre Iguodala had 14 points and 11 rebounds to lead

Philadelphia past Orlando for its third straight win.

The Sixers raced to their best start in nearly a decade by taking advantage of a soft schedule for the first third of the season, but it gets tough from here. Orlando was the first opponent in a long run of games against winning teams that includes home games this week against Chicago and Miami.

Led by Iguodala's burst in the third quarter, the Sixers (15-6) outlasted the stumbling Magic and won despite posting their lowest point total of the season. Dwight Howard's 17 points and 11 rebounds weren't enough in Orlando's fourth straight loss.

Ryan Anderson had 14 points and 20 rebounds.

Timberwolves 120, Rockets 108

In Houston, Michael Beasley scored 34 points, and Ricky Rubio had 18 points and 11 assists as Minnesota beat the Houston in coach Rick Adelman's return.

Kevin Love had 29 points for the Timberwolves, who broke open a close game with 42 points in the third for their highest-scoring quarter this season.

Kevin Martin had 29 points after missing two games with inflammation in his right heel. The Rockets lost for only the second time in 11 games.

Spurs 83, Grizzlies 73

In Memphis, Tennessee, Matt Bonner scored 15 points and Tim Duncan added 14 as San Antonio sent Memphis to its fourth straight loss.

Rookie forward Kawhi Leonard had 12 points and 10 rebounds for the Spurs, who snapped a two-game skid. Richard Jefferson scored 13 points, while Danny Green finished with 11.

O.J. Mayo led the Grizzlies with 17 points, shooting 7 of 11. Mike Conley had 15 points but Memphis was held to 37 percent shooting primarily because leading scorers Rudy Gay and Marc Gasol were a combined 3 of 18 from the field. Gay finished with one point, missing all seven of his shots.

Bucks 103, Pistons 82

In Milwaukee, Brandon Jennings had 21 points and reserve Mike Dunleavy added a season-high 20 as Milwaukee rolled to an easy victory over Detroit.

Drew Gooden shot 7 of 9 and scored 16 points for the Bucks, including seven straight in the third quarter during a decisive 12-2 run to open the second half. Detroit, which has lost five straight and nine of 10, never led in falling to 4-18.

Rodney Stuckey led the Pistons with 19 points, and Greg Monroe added 16 points and 10 rebounds.

Jazz 93, Trail Blazers 89

In Salt Lake City, Paul Millsap had 19 points and 15 rebounds as Utah used a 13-0 fourth-quarter surge to beat Portland.

LaMarcus Aldridge led Portland with 25 points, including 14 in the third quarter as the Blazers built an 11-point lead. But the Jazz fought back, even without starting center Al Jefferson and guard Raja Bell, who did not play because of injuries.

Hayward finished with 12 points. Josh Howard had 11 points and seven rebounds in his first start for the Jazz.

Giants vs. Patriots II worth 4-year wait



INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—

Here we go again.

Four years after what many consider the best finish in Super Bowl history, the Giants and Patriots are facing off once more for the NFL championship. While there are no perfect records on the line this time, this matchup could be equally enticing.

It certainly looks that way heading into Sunday's big game. In 2008, with New England undefeated and having beaten New York in the regular-season finale, the Patriots were 12-point favorites. The spread now is 3, and the Giants beat them during the season.

Both teams are on quite a roll, too. The Patriots (15-3) have won 10 straight—it was 18 in a row in '08—and the Giants (12-7) have five consecutive victories.

All of which matters not a bit, according to Bill Belichick, who will tie a record for head coaches with his fifth Super Bowl appearance.

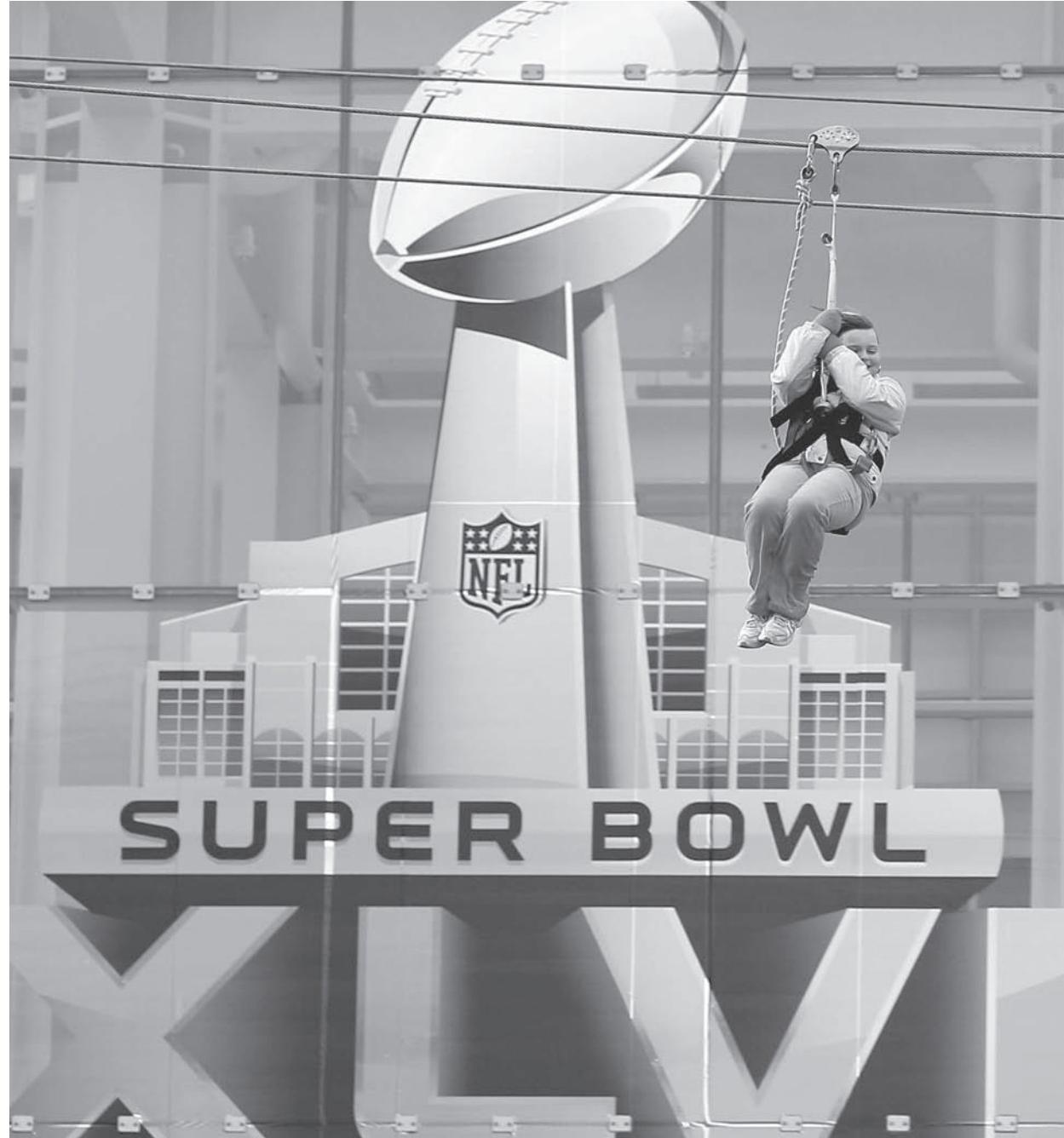
"I've been asked about that game for several days now. All of the games in the past really don't mean that much at this point," said Belichick, 3-1 in NFL title games. "This game is about this team this year. There aren't really a lot of us coaches and players who were involved in that game, and very few players, in relative terms, between both teams. We are where we are now, and we're different than where we were earlier in the season. The Giants are where they are now, and I think they're different than where they were at different points of the season. To take it back years and years before that, I don't think it has too much bearing on anything."

The loss still reverberates for former Patriots linebacker Roosevelt Colvin.

"It was like getting punched in the stomach," he said. "I still can't watch the highlights from that game because of the opportunity we missed out on was so grand."

Having come this far before is immeasurably helpful, according to Justin Tuck, the leader of the Giants' defense whose return to health and form has keyed New York's resurgence. He says the experience of four years ago in the Arizona desert will benefit everyone.

"The only thing that I tell the younger guys is make football football," Tuck said. "Don't make this game bigger



In this Jan. 29, 2012 file photo, a fan rides a zip line during the NFL Experience for Super Bowl XLVI in Indianapolis. AP

than it has to be. Everybody around you is going to make it bigger, but we have to concentrate on why we're going out there. There's going to be a lot of parties. There's going to be a lot of people pulling at your coattail. Listen, if you go out there and you handle your business and you win this game, you can party all you want to after that.

"For me, personally, the first time I went to a Super Bowl I approached it as such—as a once in a lifetime thing."

For Tuck, it wasn't. And while the defense he leads to Indianapolis isn't quite as overwhelming as the unit that

made life miserable for Tom Brady in '08, it has been reinvigorated as the Giants surged to the NFC championship. It also is just as deep as the group that sacked Brady five times, hit him nine more—Osi Umenyiora claimed he had that many hits alone—and unnerved the usually unflappable star.

Today, it's Tuck, Umenyiora, All-Pro Jason Pierre-Paul, Dave Tollefson and linebacker Mathias Kiwanuka, who compare favorably with Umenyiora, Tuck, Michael Strahan, Jay Alford and LB Antonio Pierce in 2008.

Other than head coaches Belichick

and New York's Tom Coughlin, that is the most common element between the two Super Bowls.

"It's been a strength of their team for as long as I can remember," Brady said. "Michael Strahan, as great of a player as he was, I think we played them in 2003 and they were still harassing the quarterback. It seems like they always have guys who can rush the quarterback. Justin Tuck is as good as they come. Osi week in and week out, he's a player who can ruin a game for an offense. You look at the group they have now, and they have a ton of depth at the

defensive line position."

Controversial receivers Randy Moss and Plaxico Burress have been replaced by skilled playmakers like tight ends Rob Gronkowski and Aaron Hernandez in New England, wideouts Hakeem Nicks and Victor Cruz in New York. Eli Manning no longer is a question as Giants quarterback, and has carried the offense much the way running backs Brandon Jacobs and Ahmad Bradshaw did in the past.

Lawrence Tynes kicked the Giants into the Super Bowl in overtime in '08 and—incredibly—this year, too. Wes Welker led the Patriots with 112 catches that season and had 122 in this one.

Sixteen Giants remain from the 17-14 Super Bowl victory, and only seven Patriots are still around.

Similarities and differences, all juicy elements for Giants-Patriots II.

Here we go again.

Former Colts coach Caldwell hired by Ravens

OWINGS MILLS, Md. (AP)—Jim Caldwell is back in the NFL, this time as the Baltimore Ravens quarterbacks coach.

The 57-year-old Caldwell was hired on Monday by the Ravens. The appointment comes less than two weeks after Caldwell was fired as head coach of the Indianapolis Colts following a 2-14 season.

Caldwell went 26-22 in three years with Indianapolis, including a Super Bowl appearance.

After working with Colts standout quarterback Peyton Manning for 10 seasons, Caldwell will turn his attention toward improving Ravens quarterback Joe Flacco and teaming with offensive coordinator Cam Cameron to strengthen Baltimore's passing game, which ranked 19th this season.

"After spending considerable time with Jim over the last week, we think he will be an excellent fit with our team, coaching the quarterbacks and helping with our offense," Ravens coach John Harbaugh said. "We believe he enhances our staff. Jim has a tremendous history coaching at the college and pro level, especially working with quarterbacks and providing help with offenses."

"The timing is right to add a quarterbacks coach after Cam and Joe worked so closely and well together this year. It's the right step for us now."

Before taking over as head coach at Indianapolis, Caldwell spent seven seasons as the team's quarterbacks coach. Under his direction, Manning won three NFL MVP awards. In 2004, Indianapolis went 12-4 behind Manning, who threw for a career-high 49 touchdowns and just 10 interceptions.

"I am really excited to work with coach Harbaugh, Cam and the rest of the coaching staff," Caldwell said. "It's a great fit for me, and I'm happy they saw it that way. I can't wait to get started with the Ravens, an organization that from top to bottom is one of the NFL's best."

Baltimore is the only NFL team to reach the playoffs in each of the last four seasons. The Ravens were eliminated this year by New England in the AFC title game.

Irsay hopes to halt Manning talk during Super Bowl

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Jim Irsay did his own politicking Monday.

Instead of talking about Peyton Manning and the franchise quarterback's future in Indianapolis, the Colts owner quickly tossed the football to a real politician.

"When I was asked about Peyton, I was going to say why don't you ask Mitch (Daniels) about his presidential run? Any comments Mitch?" Irsay said drawing laughter as he turned to the Indiana governor.

Irsay's diversionary tactic didn't work.

With the Manning-Irsay spat still dominating talk around town, Irsay tried to deflect attention away from this week's biggest distraction and put the focus squarely back on the Super Bowl matching the New York Giants against the New England Patriots.

"I'm not talking about Peyton this

week," Irsay said as more than a dozen reporters followed him through the media center's hallways. "When Peyton and I talked (last week), we both thought the focus should be on the Super Bowl. We want to focus on the Super Bowl."

Good luck.

Yes, getting the game in Indy was a major coup for Irsay, who pushed the city to bid twice for the big game and lobbied fellow owners to give his home city its first Super Bowl.

But as the world turns in Indianapolis, Super Bowl week just happens to come at the most tumultuous time in Indy's ongoing soap opera.

Since finishing 2-14 and earning the first pick in April's draft, Irsay has fired vice chairman Bill Polian, general manager Chris Polian, coach Jim Caldwell and most of Caldwell's assistants. He's hired 39-year-old Ryan Grigson as the

new general manager and former Ravens defensive coordinator Chuck Pagano as his new coach.

Last week, after Manning went public with his complaints about the dour atmosphere at the team's complex, Irsay retorted with his own public rant—calling Manning a "politician" and contending he had been "campaigning."

The two tried to put an end to the spat Friday by issuing a joint statement that essentially said they had spoken and reconciled.

It didn't slow the speculation about Manning's future. The September neck surgery that forced Manning to miss the season was his third in 19 months.

Irsay has indicated he won't risk Manning's long-term future by putting an unhealthy quarterback on the field, and even Manning's old friends seem to be concerned about his health.

"It would be hard to get healthy and

prove he's healthy before March," former tight end Ken Dilger said referring to the deadline for Indy to pay Manning a \$28 million roster bonus or risk losing him as a free agent. "It's going to be hard, really hard."

Daniels and Indy Mayor Greg Ballard both got caught up in the discussion, too, though they managed to stay away from discussing Manning's plans.

"To have Peyton Manning be the caring guy that he is, we are so lucky to have him, and we are so lucky to have Jim Irsay as an owner," Ballard said. "How all this plays out doesn't really matter to me."

And Irsay contends there's time to discuss all that—after the Super Bowl.

"Peyton is everything you dream about as an owner, getting that type of player," Irsay said. "I have just been so blessed with all that he's done for this franchise."

MP United FC holds rally

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

 The growing MP United Football Club kicked off the 2012 spring season in style, holding a rally at the Navy Hill pitch last Saturday.

The club's players in the co-ed U6, U8, and U10, boys U12, girls and boys U15, and boys U18 gathered at the field for the two-hour recognition and membership drive. Joining them were the various coaches, club officials, Jeff Boyer, country manager of club main sponsor IP&E, and Northern Mariana Islands Football Association president Jerry Tan.

Tan delivered a brief message at the rally, thanking and congratulating MP United players and its officials and coaches for their success in 2011 and active participation in NMIFA-organized events.

MP United's Vickie Izuka also took time out to acknowledge the club's sponsors and supporters and referees, including the Department of Parks and Recreation, Garapan Elementary School, Dr. Norma Ada, and Konfikt. Izuka was later joined by other club officials in distributing gifts (towels and other items from IT&E) to players and coaches of the various age group teams.

Before concluding the rally, MP United called on the champion teams for the 2011 fall season.

MP United U18 and its coach Brad Ruzala went on to receive a trophy and presented it to Boyer. MP United ruled the boys U18 competition and the 2011 FA



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
▲ MP United Football Club players, coaches, and officials pose for a group photo during a rally last Saturday at Navy Hill.

Challenge Cup, beating sister team MP United Silver (U15).

MP United Silver was also presented a trophy for topping the boys U15 league, while the club's U12 squad was recognized, too for ruling the first ever 2011 NMIFA Boys and Girls FA Cup.

Players who made it to NMIFA's elite list were also feted. The list includes U18's Best 11 selection members Yi Shan Wang, Dae Min Jeon, Jeoung Joon Lee, Jin Han Yoon, and Moon Bin Hong; U15's Best 11 Jehn Joyner Ryota Ito, Dakota Hall, Jake Lee, Kennedy Izuka, Enrico del Rosario, John Taisacan, and Gregzon Fontanilla; and Girls U15's Best 9 Amy Taylor, Seoung Hyun Lee, Hae Ri Kim, and Masami Sato.

The recognition day last weekend also served as a send-off for MP United players (boys U12, U15, and U18) who will leave for Guam this weekend for a two-day competition.

to log at least 700 pinfalls, as runner-up Gloria Omechelang only mustered 678 pinfalls in Day 1. Omechelang had an up-and-down performance in the first day with her 145 in Game 1 and 178, 186, and 169 in the last three games. She came back in Day 2, but still fell short of overtaking Villavicencio, as Omechelang only knocked down 664 pins.

With Omechelang already notching second place and the \$40 runner-up prize, Ron Cal rounded out the Top 3 with her four-game total of 649 pinfalls. Cal was flat in her first game, making only 138 pinfalls, but recovered in the last three (177, 178, and 147).

In the Fiji Water/Prince of the Lanes, Marion McKenzie defeated four other youth bowlers. He recorded 685 pinfalls (174, 164, 167, and 180) for an average of 171.25 and a 23-pinfall win over 2011 Prince of the Lanes John Taisacan.

Taisacan had the highest score in a single game (193 pinfalls in Game 2), but failed to surpass McKenzie after posting 167, 143, and 155 in three other games for a total of 658 pinfalls. Rounding out the Top 3 was Ryan Batac (600 pinfalls), while Nikko Gutierrez (579) and Marcel McKenzie (357) came in at fourth and fifth, respectively.

JR. AYUYUS

From Page 28

eight points in the first half.

After holding the Junior Ayuyus to just one point in the second half, SIS' defense broke down in the third quarter and allowed KHS to reclaim the lead, 28-23, heading into the final period.

Santos' eight points bested SIS' collective effort in the push.

It was a back-and-forth matchup from the start and the action was far from over at the beginning of the fourth quarter.

SIS buckled back down on defense and contained the Junior Ayuyus to just three markers at crunch time, while Cepeda led another comeback

on the other end.

Cepeda buried three shots, including a buzzer-beater from the right wing to force overtime. However, KHS found its second wind and ran away with the victory in the bonus period.

Cepeda managed five more points in the clutch, but KHS' Santos obliged him with seven.

KHS' Santos topped the field with 21 points, while SIS' Cepeda tallied 19 on the short end.

In the first match, GCA managed an early 6-3 edge in the opening 10 minutes, but MHS settled down in the second quarter and assumed a 14-10 lead at the half.

MHS' Shane DeLeon Guerrero led the way with six points in the second quarter push.

After the pause MHS broke

out to a stout 27-15 advantage in the third period thanks to the eight points of Dai Lixing.

MHS never looked back and ran away with the match in the final period.

MHS' bench made its mark late in the game as six different players put a hand in on the action.

After starting its season with a pair of big wins, GCA's offense was held to single digits in all four quarters on Monday. MHS, on the other hand, executed a well-balanced attack.

MHS' Lixing led the Junior Dolphins with 10 points, while James Libut came away with eight.

The season continues at MHS today with a 4pm junior varsity pairing between unbeaten MHS (1-0) and KHS followed immediately by the varsity ticket.

The MHS varsity is unbeaten in three games, while KHS holds a 2-1 slate.

First Game

MHS 43 – Lixing 10, DL-Guerrero 6, Aguilar 4, Camacho 4, Palacios 4, Yap 4, Ogumoro 3, Sanarez 3, Ano 2, Kwon 2, Manalili 2.

GCA 21 – Libut 8, Lee 4, Sugue 4, Smithee 2, Reyes 2, Del Rosario 1.

Scoring by quarters: 3-6, 14-10, 27-15, 43-21.

Second Game

KHS 40 – Je. Santos 21, Jo Santos 8, Evangelista 4, Borja 2, Mafnas 2, Racadio 2, Foster 1

SIS 36 – Cepeda 19, Y Kim 7, J Kim 4, M Kim 4, B Kim 2

Scoring by quarters: 11-10, 12-17, 28-23, 31-31, 40-36 (OT)

CNMI

From Page 28

a wild throw.

New Zealand answered with a run in the bottom frame and added another run later in its final stand, but the CNMI held strong for the win.

Regis batted 1-for-3 and touched base twice in the match.

Other notables include a double by Ricardo Dela Cruz, who batted 2-for-3 in the game.

Regis led the CNMI both at the plate and on the mound.

The CNMI starting pitcher

was awarded the win with just two strikeouts in the game.

He faced 31 batters before teammate Henry Rabauliman was tapped to close the game.

Regis managed five groundouts with eight fly outs on 113 pitches, 63 of which being called for a strike, and plunked two batters.

As a team, the CNMI smashed five hits, and although they gave up a handful of errors out in the field no hits were credited to their opponents.

Guam 8, CNMI 2

Back on Sunday, Guam struck

first with a run in the second inning and then jumped in front, 4-0, in the top of the fourth.

The CNMI managed to get a run back in the bottom frame, but Guam exploded again with three runs in the fifth inning, shifting the count to 7-1.

The CNMI mustered a run in the bottom of the sixth, but Guam got it back in the bottom of the seventh and shut the CNMI down in the final stand.

In the game, the CNMI was held to just three hits at the plate, one of which was an RBI triple by Regis. He went on to bat 2-for-3 and stole a base but

also hit into a double play.

Most of the CNMI's base runners reached on errors, but Guam did a good job minimizing the damage.

Guam racked up nine hits in the match. Kin Fernandez Jr. led the U.S. territory's offense with three hits for four RBIs, while teammate Justin Elm swung 2-for-3 with an RBI. Jonathan Mayo scored two runs with an RBI single.

Guam's Nicolas Cruz pitched a complete game in just 93 pitches with seven strikeouts. The CNMI went through four pitchers in the ordeal.

ond semis berth last weekend, following an 85-75 win against Chalan Kiya/Loving Hands.

Second Game

As Lito/Chow Queen 84 – Metran 27, Capalad 16, Deleon Guerrero 12, Tabamo 9, Wabinga 6, Lansang 4, Babauta 4, Galvez 2, Sacramento 2.

Garapan/JHEM's 79 – Mat. Duenas 21, Ngeskebei 16, Montano 15, Catalla 10, Alipio 9, Camacho 4, Surima 2.

Scoring by quarters: 8-23, 32-40, 59-64, 84-79.

Fourth Game

San Vicente Saints 78 – Eubanks 14, Torres 121, Lu. Reyes 11, L.J. Reyes 9, Brennan 9, Lizama 4, Basa 4, Cruz 4, Galarse 2.

Susupe/Armatel 58 – Abuy 17, Ja. Ano 16, Trajano 14, Crisostomo 6, Moreno 5, Malasarte 2.

Scoring by quarters: 9-9, 34-31, 50-52, 78-58.

SAN VICENTE

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Susupe, which started the game with only six players and added one later in the second, was still on top at the end of the third canto, 52-50, behind the 12-point explosion of Jared Ano. However, the fourth-ranked squad in the playoffs ran out of offensive options in the final period and was limited to only three baskets. James Abuy made two field goals for five points, while Art Trajano had a free throw.

The Saints, on the other hand, saved the best for last, firing 28 points—their highest output in all four quarters. Eight different players contributed for San Vicente in the crucial fourth frame.

With the win San Vicente will face fellow young team San Antonio/Gene's Barber in the semifinals this Sunday at 10:30am.

with the winner advancing to the one-game finals at 3:30pm on the same day. San Antonio marched into the semis after an 82-66 triumph over San Roque/Morales.

Travis Eubanks top-scored for San Vicente's first playoff win with his 14 points, while Patrick Torres and Luiz Reyes added 12 and 11, respectively. The rest of the San Vicente players combined for 32 points. Three Susupe players scored in double figures with Abuy tallying 17, Ano making 16, and Trajano chipping in 14, but the rest of the team totaled only 13.

Both squads struggled early, missing all their shots in the first two minutes of play and the opening quarter ended in a tie, 9-all. Then in the second quarter, L.J. Reyes came off the bench and delivered nine points to put San Vicente on top at the break, 34-31.

Tables turned in the third period, as Ano lifted Susupe on his shoulders, scoring nine straight baskets in that canto for a 52-50

cushion. However, Ano went cold in the fourth period and the shorthanded Susupe eventually lost steam in the end.

Meanwhile, As Lito/Chow Queen defeated Garapan/JHEM's in the first playoff game last weekend, 84-79.

As Lito also had a big fourth quarter, outgunning Garapan, 25-15, to turn a 59-64 deficit to a five-point win. As Lito fell behind by as much as 15 in the opening quarter, 8-23, before Sheen Metran, Mel Capalad, and Rainier Deleon Guerrero brought the team back and completed the come-from-behind victory.

Metran canned 16 of his 27 points in the fourth quarter, while Capalad and Deleon Guerrero finished with 16 and 12, respectively.

Metran and company will now be pitted against Chalan Kanoa/Fong's Bakery in the other semis match that will be played this Sunday at 9am. Chalan Kanoa booked the sec-

All Island Invitational 1

PHOTOS by ROSELYN B. MONROYO



From left, Tsunami Saipan's Miku Tammy, Saipan Swim Club's Kento Akimaru, and Tsunami Saipan's Kensuke Kimura plunge into the pool during the Tsunami Saipan-organized All Island Invitational 1 last month at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi.



Swimmers wait for the start of their respective races.



Saipan Swim Club coach Mike Villagomez huddles with some of his swimmers before the start of the tournament.



Tsunami Saipan's Ryuto Yanai waits for other finishers in the 100m butterfly event.



Tsunami Saipan's Ryosei Toda cools down after the 400m freestyle race.



Swimmers get ready at the starting block.



Tsunami Saipan's Angel Marie Tan stretches for the 200m butterfly race.



Tsunami Saipan's Miku Tammy races in the 100m butterfly event.



A Tsunami Saipan swimmer goes for the second lap of the 800m free-style race.



A swimmer gets ready for the 100m backstroke race.

Heat shake off slow start, beat Hornets

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Sports

Giants vs. Patriots II worth 4-year wait

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Jr. Ayuyus survive Jr. Geckos in OT



Kagman High School's Jesse Santos drives to the basket against Saipan International School in Monday's MISO junior varsity boys basketball match at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

Kagman High School's Junior Ayuyus outlasted Saipan International School, 40-36, in overtime as the Marianas Interscholastic Sports Organization's junior varsity boys basketball season picked up last Monday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

CNMI splits two games in 18U Oceania Championship

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

The CNMI Junior National Baseball Team went winless in the first round of competition of the 2012 18 & Under Oceania AAA Championship, but finally hit pay dirt when the second leg of the double-round robin got going Monday.

After enduring a 2-8 loss to host team Guam on Sunday night, the CNMI finally entered the win column the next day thanks to a 4-2 victory over



CNMI first baseman Ian Rogolifo, left, returns the ball to the pitcher during Saturday's game against Australia.

See JR. AYUYUS on Page 26



K H S evened out its win-loss record to 1-1, while the SIS Junior Geckos are still searching for their first win after starting the season with a couple of hard-fought losses.

Meanwhile, MHS Junior Dolphins torched Grace Christian Academy, 43-21, in the early match.

MHS improved its record to 2-0 while issuing GCA its first loss in three games.

In the late match, KHS took a candlestick 11-10 lead in the opening period thanks to a 3-pointer by Jesse Santos.

SIS, however, roared back to seize control in the second quarter and took a five-point lead, 17-12, at halftime.

SIS' Chris Cepeda carried the torch for the Junior Geckos with

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New Zealand (2-2) as action continued at Paseo Stadium in Agana, Guam.

The win improved the Commonwealth's win-loss slate to 1-3 with two games yet to play.

The CNMI faced top-ranked Australia in a home draw yesterday. Results were not available as of press time. Australia came into Monday night's match against Guam undefeated in three games.

CNMI 4, New Zealand 2

After two scoreless innings, the CNMI took a 4-0 lead in the third inning off a three-RBI double by Leroy Regis. He scored later off

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San Vicente completes MDX semis cast

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER



The San Vicente Saints caught the last bus to the semifinals of the 2011 MDX Amateur Radio Club Inter-Village Friendship League after crushing Susupe/

Armatel, 78-58, last Sunday at the Civic Center Basketball Court in Susupe.

San Vicente ended up with a 20-point winning margin in the playoff game despite trailing after three quarters, as it held the depleted crew of Susupe to six points in the payoff period.

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The San Vicente Saints' Vince Iglesias pulls up for a jumper against Susupe/Armatel's Jared Ano during the first quarter of their playoff game last week in the MDX caging at the Civic Center Basketball Court in Susupe.

Talavera, Villavicencio draw first blood

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Robert Talavera and Yho Villavicencio ruled Saipan Bowling Association's first monthly roll-off for 2012.

Talavera topped the SBA/Budweiser King of the Lanes Tournament, showing consist-

tency at the Capitol Bowling Center last Sunday, while Villavicencio won in the Queen of the Lanes, besting 10 other female keglers.

His 205 pinfalls in Game 1 gave Talavera a strong start and he went on to post 200-plus pinfalls in two more games (220 and 245) to go with his 195 in Game 2 for a four-game

See TALAVERA on Page 26



Yho Villavicencio, left, and Robert Talavera show the prizes they won for topping the SBA/Budweiser January roll-off last Sunday at the Capitol Bowling Center.